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THE ROSE OF ARRAGON

A Play.

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL, HAYMARKET.

BY

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

LONDON:

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MDCCCXLII.

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TO

NEALE THOMSON, ESQ.,

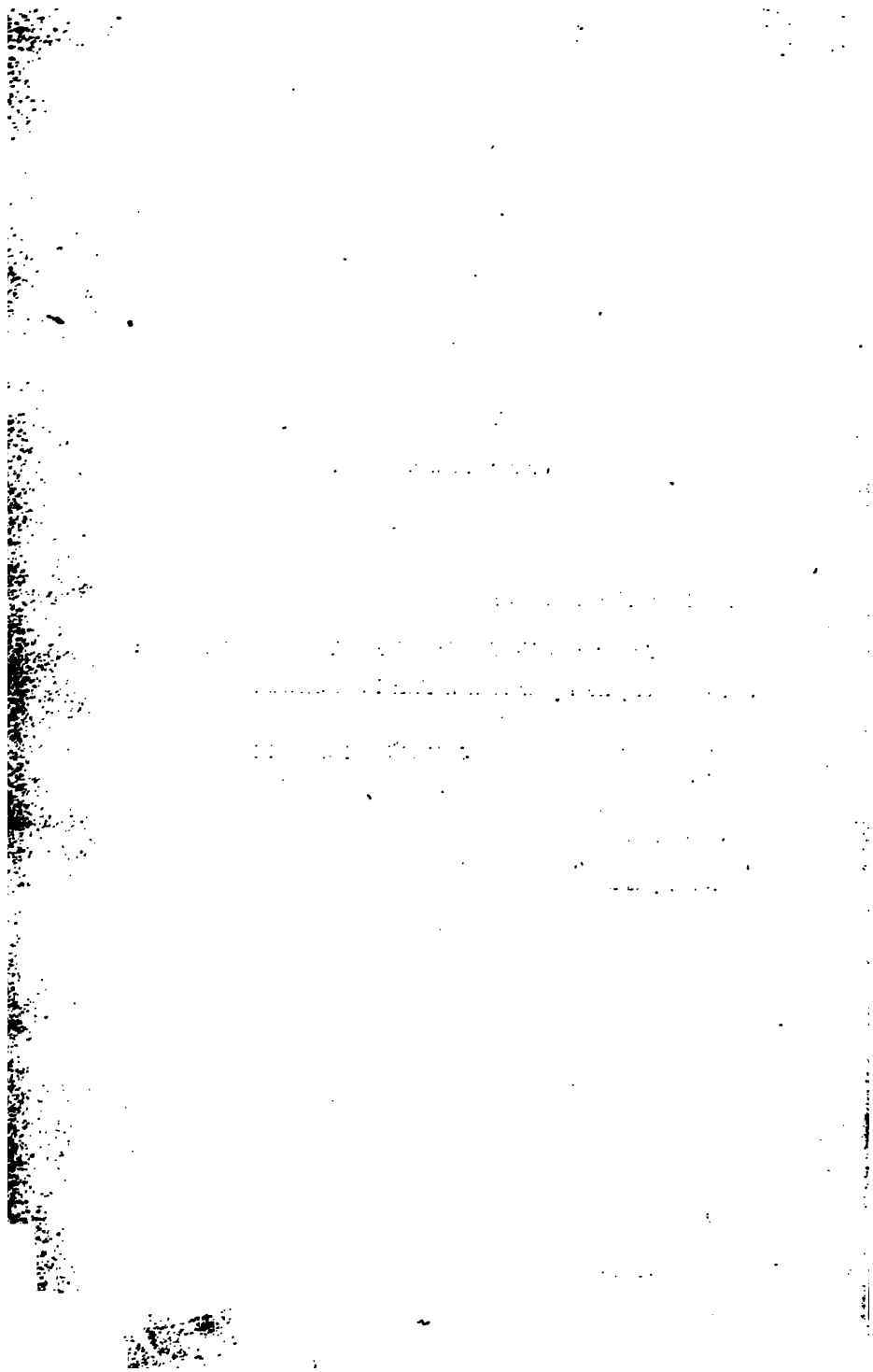
OF CAMPHILL, GLASGOW.

MY DEAR NEALE THOMSON,

Accept this Humble, but Sincere Testimony of Affection
and Gratitude, from your faithful Friend and Servant,

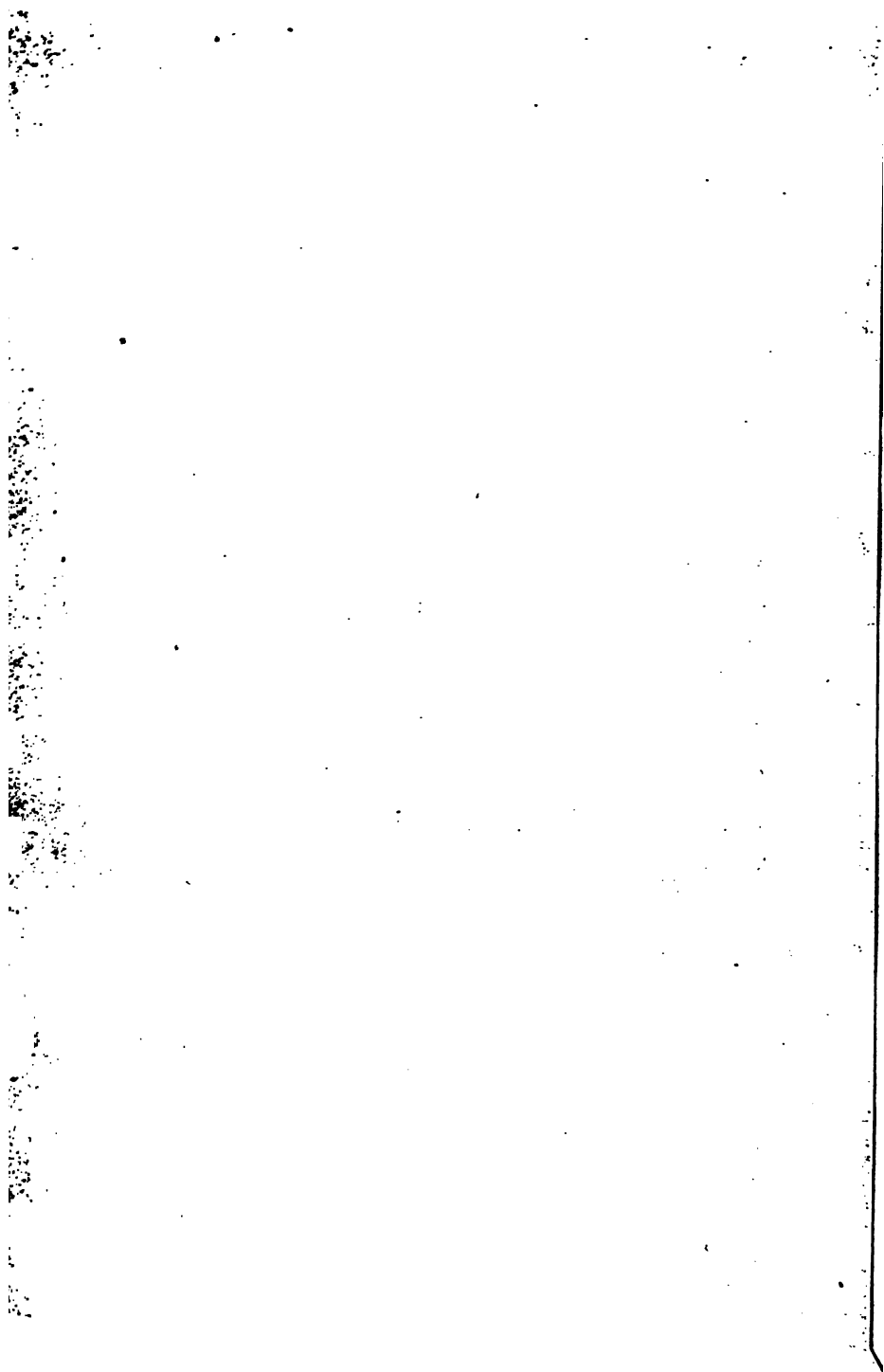
JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

29, Alfred-place,
Bedford-square, London,
30th May, 1842.



ADVERTISEMENT.

To my staunch friend, W. A. Dow, Esq. King's Bench Walk, Temple, I return my thanks for superintending this Play in the course of the press ; but this is not the whole of my debt. By pertinaciously urging a course of the action, materially different from what I originally intended, he has enabled me to enhance the general interest in a degree which has had the effect of rendering it infinitely superior to what it would otherwise have been.



CHARACTERS.

THE KING OF ARRAGON	. . .	<i>Mr. Howe.</i>
ALONZO (<i>his Son, married to OLIVIA</i>)	. . .	<i>Mr. H. Holl.</i>
ANDREAS	} (<i>Courtiers</i>) . . .	<i>Mr. Wilson.</i>
CARLOS		<i>Mr. Worrell.</i>
GOMEZ		<i>Mr. Williams.</i>
PEDRO (<i>an Executioner</i>)	. . .	<i>Mr. Gough.</i>
RUPHINO (<i>a Peasant</i>)	. . .	<i>Mr. Stuart.</i>
ALASCO (<i>his Son</i>)	. . .	<i>Mr. C. Kean.</i>
ALMAGRO (<i>ALASCO's friend, in love with OLIVIA</i>)		<i>Mr. Phelps.</i>
VELASQUEZ	. . .	<i>Mr. F. Vining.</i>
CORTEZ	. . .	<i>Mr. Caulfield.</i>
NUNEZ	. . .	<i>Mr. T. F. Matthews.</i>
OLIVIA (<i>RUPHINO's Daughter</i>)	. . .	<i>Mrs. C. Kean.</i>
THERESA (<i>an Attendant</i>)	. . .	

Officers, Jailer, Peasants, Guards, &c.

THE ROSE OF ARRAGON.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Room in the Citadel.

Enter CARLOS and ANDREAS.

ANDREAS.

The Prince not yet set out!

CARLOS.

Not yet, he cleaves
To home with floating on his peasant wife.
His journey towards the frontier since he
From day to day delays already; but
The King, impatient of the real delay,
Brooks it no longer. He departs at noon.

ANDREAS.

Guess you, my lord, the motive of the King
In banishing, as 'twere, at such a time,
The Prince from Sarragossa? Hard exchange,
The bridal chamber for the warrior's tent!
The murmurs and the dalliance of love,

For the trump's braying and the clang of steel !
Methinks, the nuptials, he so interrupts,
Can scarce be to his mind !

CARLOS.

'Tis certain, sir,
They are not, and no wonder. The fair Prince
Had bent full low, to choose, for mate, a bride
Of pure Hidalgo blood ; how then, the child
Of a peasant—grant her pattern of her sex,
And never match'd throughout the lengthy line
Of Eve's angelic daughters ?

ANDREAS.

Such she is !
A noteless maid, that from all note, how'er
Surpassing, doth divert observance, so
Her perfect beauty and consorting form
Bewilder rivalry itself, and turn
The infidel into a worshipper !

CARLOS.

Certain she has no peer ; yet, not a match
For the King's son. So thinks the King, and hence
The Prince hath honourable banishment.
The army needs no prince, the soldier who
Commands it, prince of leaders !—do you think
The King stops here ? Will he remain content
With banishment of the enamour'd Prince ?
Will that remove the cause of banishment—
The knot the Prince has tied—will that undo it ?
'Tis but the opening of a drama, sir,
Of which the master-action is to come !

ANDREAS.

I trust the King, if more he meditates,
Will act advisedly—Our peasant princess
Amongst her class ranks highest ; royal pastures
For their extent and stock, her father hath ;—
Is more beloved than envied ; hath a son
Of parts that look with scorn upon his station,
And fiery soul, more prompt to move than rest ;
The peasantry speak things that mock content—
Complain of wasting levies, grievous imposts—
And with their thoughts our citizens chime in ;
The Cortez have been calmer too.—Behoves
The king be wary how he acts !—A straw
Has struck the sceptre from as firm a grasp,
And may do so with his.—Withdraw, my lord ;
Here come the Prince and Princess, taking leave.
Whate'er we wish, upon an hour so tender
'Twere pity to intrude.

CARLOS.

Have with you, sir.

[*They go out.*]*Enter ALONZO and OLIVIA (weeping on his shoulder).*

ALONZO.

Hold up, my sweet !—help me to play my part—
The hardest one !—to go ! O stiffly move
The limbs that thwart the bidding of the heart,
And mine would root me here !—Olivia !—
Help me, sweet love !—thy looks dissuade enough
Without thy tears, where no dissuasion needs,
And all must nought avail !—Each tear you shed
Adds weight to weight, where strength departs from strength
Already overtask'd ! My tender love !

O'erlook thine own loss in the thought of mine;
And, that again o'erlooking, glance beyond,
And find enhanced joys, for friends restored;
Who now could bless the chance they once repined at,
Seeing that happiness awhile foregone
Is riches well laid out at usury—
Doubled, when coming back.

OLIVIA.

Will it come back?
Will it not fare with us as I have heard
It oft-times does, where men with coffers trade
Already full enough?—who, when they think
Their treasures will run o'er, find all run out—
For o'ergrown affluence, stark beggary!
Oh, no, my love! this parting brings no gain,
Or if it does, no gain that can repair,
Far less repay, this loss!

ALONZO.

Farewell!

OLIVIA.

O Heaven!
You are not going!—sooner would I think
My arm were from my body falling off,
Far better could endure!—my soul's best life,
Why art thou aught than what I deem'd thee once—
The peasant that I loved!

ALONZO.

Lamentest thou
My royal birth?

OLIVIA.

Is't not mine enemy,
Enforcing absence, enemy to love?

Oh, on a peasant's breast I were content
To lean my cheek—that peasant being thou !
Unheeded had the gorgeous world pass'd by,
Or if I raised it thence to take a look,
It had been, only, with more rapt content,
To lay it down again !—O love, forego
Thy regal heritance !—doff name and all
For love, that's more than all,—I would for thee !

ALONZO.

For thee I keep them, as attire, sweet love !
Befitting him to wear, who weareth thee.

OLIVIA.

Leave such attire for those who covet it ;
Desert, contented in thyself remain !
In thy fair self thou hast attire enough !
Thou rank'st in heaven—why care to rank on earth ?
Where thou shalt see demerit rank as high—
More high, most often—winning thy just seat.
Why have not those, alas ! who have one heart
In love, one heart in every other thing ?
Then it would be cleaving all ! No rending ?—No
Dividing !—severing so wide apart,
Hope sickens at the thought to meet again !

ALONZO.

Once more, farewell !

OLIVIA.

Oh, no ! my lord ; oh, no !
I feel it is impossible to part !
Oh that it pleased thee, Heaven, to close my eyes
While yet I hold him here—I were content
The seal were never broke ! 'Twere happier

Than open them again, and find him gone !
My lord !—my love !—my husband !

ALONZO.

Oh, remissness !
That to o'erlook which lay so near my care !
List—and in this regard, on comfort feast,
As freely as thou wilt ! There is a heart
That will be near thee, on whose steadfast love
And faith we both may count. Its owner, one
Whose rank is warranty against suspicion—
Shunn'd for his office—of a nature such
As I forbear, even to thee, to name.
By him shall I be straightly advertis'd
Of all that passes here ;—so, should occasion
Demand my very presence, I am near thee
Unknown to any, save that man !—This secret
Lodge in thy heart, with an entire belief,
As trust that cannot fail thee.

Enter the KING, CARLOS, and ANDREAS.

KING.

More delay !— [OLIVIA faints, on seeing the KING.]
Hence, sir !—The rank you should adorn, you shame—
Too worthy for the wearer !—Am I heard ?

ALONZO.

Too well,—at least for one. It was enough
To part with me,—the hard necessity
Required not such rebuke, to make it harder !
Her senses all are lapsed,—will you not take her,
My father ? Should she go to other arms
When 'tis thy son's she leaves ?—
[Places her in the KING's arms.]

For that son's sake,
As thou hold'st dear his weal, health, being, honour,
Protect and cherish her.—O Heaven!—Farewell!

[*Rushes out.*]

KING.

Don Carlos, take her—give her to the care
Of those who wait upon her,—watch by her
Till to herself she comes—then break at once
My will, as I just now possess'd you of it.
Her native air will better minister
Restoratives, than our close palace can!
You, Andreas, my council summon, straight.
A peasant share the throne of Arragon!
Better the throne of Arragon o'erturn!

[*They go out.*]

SCENE II.

A Cottage.—In the distance a mountainous country.

Enter RUPHINO and ALASCO.

RUPHINO.

How sayest now, Alasco? Art content?
Thy overbearing pride is conqueror!
His private nuptials with thy sister hath
The Prince Alonzo own'd, in presence of
His royal father, and convention full
Of all the noble blood in Arragon;
And thou, the peasant-heir unto a stool,
By proclamation under royal seal—
For 'tis the same as such, as clear implied—

But proofs, instead, of holiest intents,
Is to commit, ourselves, a grievous wrong,
And surfeit virtue of its bootless deeds,
That cannot earn it credit! So oft-times
Uncharitableness defaulters makes
Of those who else were solvent. Think, my son,
If this were told the Prince, how it might change
His aspect towards thy sister, without cloud
And summer brightness now!

ALASCO.

If it were told?

'Tis told!

RUPHINO.

By whom?

ALASCO.

By me!—nor stintingly.
Think you I went a-begging when I went
To claim admission of my sister's rights,
As loud and broad as though she had a king
To father her, being a prince's wife?

RUPHINO.

I was content to know she was his wife—
Her honour so assured, it needed not
Be bruited through the realm—disparaging
To his rank!

ALASCO (*greatly indignant*).

Disparaging!

RUPHINO.

Well boy, how now?

ALASCO (*recollecting himself*).

You are her father and you have a right
To speak of your own child.

RUPHINO.

I hope I have.

ALASCO.

Disparaging!—the Prince beheld her first
At a tournament, among the common gazers,
No state to point her out, and yet the mark
Attracted every eye!—he heard the buzz
Of wonder, heralding her matchless beauty,
And, far and near, the concourse summoning
Before the humble seat allotted her!
With but her peasant brother for a page,
With but a peasant's fillet for a crown,
With robes no other than a peasant's tire,
There sat my sister, on that common bench,
Converting it into a radiant throne
Before which ribbons, stars, and coronets
Did press to stand and render homage to her—
Disparaging!

RUPHINO.

I meant to his rank!

ALASCO.

His rank?

Rank's but an eminence whereon we see
Sometimes a tower, sometimes a hovel—makes
Alike conspicuous the dignity
Or meanness of the thing that's built upon it!

RUPHINO.

My son, these thoughts—

ALASCO.

Nay, father, hear me on!

I honour rank, when he, who owns, becomes it!

For, here, our stations differ from our clothes—
That these are to our measure made; those, not—
Whence marvellous misfitting. Tell me not
Of the Prince's rank, but tell me of his deeds;
Of which I know but little, save that once
He used a peasant's daughter honestly—
That, of its grace diminish'd, when the thing
He felt no shame to do, he fear'd to own!
A private marriage not to be divulged
'Till he saw time!—I saw that time was now,
And made him see it, too!

RUPHINO.

'Twas breach of faith!

ALASCO.

No, father!—what I was no party to
I no observance owed. My sister's marriage
Did accident alone reveal to me.
I found that she had won the Prince's love
Who well deserved a prince—he thought she did,
And married her!—If good enough to wed,
I thought my sister good enough to own—
And told him so. What instances I used,
And what dissuasion he, it matters not;
The Prince has own'd her, and I am content;
Though I had wish'd her otherwise bestow'd!

RUPHINO.

What! on Almagro? must I tell thee, son,
The thousandth time, I do not like that man;
Whose God is not the one he prayeth to,
But the worst idol that a man can serve—
Self!—find the friend he does not profit by,

In pride, or vanity, or avarice,
And I will grant him single in his loves !
Find me the friend he would not sacrifice,
When profit kept not pace with cherishing ;
And I will show you him who made Almagro,
Help'd him with brain and heart, and, when in need,
Was left there for a doit.

ALASCO.

Velasquez ?

RUPHINO.

Yes !

ALASCO.

Velasquez doats !

RUPHINO.

He doats who loves Almagro !
Thou, boy ! perceiv'st not he is arrogant ?
Whom does he not o'erbear that is too weak
From gentleness or place, to throw him off ?
Of all pernicious things, the very worst
Is large ambition with a narrow soul,
Because it strives for power which, when obtain'd
'Tis certain to abuse.

ALASCO.

He is generous !

RUPHINO.

And you do hear of it. Boy, there are men
Who coin by charities, and he is one !
Say what he gives, I'll tell you what he gets
By what he gives, which makes his bounties mites ;
His modest bounties, that do never seek
To shun the light. He is ungrateful, son !
And he that is ungrateful can't be generous !

ALASCO.

He is my friend !—I love him : he loves me !

RUPHINO.

Not thee he loves, boy, but thy properties,
That much avail him in the game he plays
To raise himself to popularity.
For, through thy reverend uncle's loving care,
Thy mind, in youth, was plough'd by diligence,
And with the seeds of knowledge amply sown,
That found a kindly soil ! Wherein he lacks,
Thou makest up to him with such a zeal,
Privation doth enrich him !—his small worth—
For he has worth, as every man hath some—
Thy magnifying love doth heave for him
Into a mountain !—make it pass for such—
That, with the crowd, he grows enormously !
But he hath vanity voracious as
The hunger that 's disease—which, though 'tis gorg'd
Full to the throat, cannot stop craving on !
Wait till thou stint'st him there ! he'll fail thee—yea,
Though he could save thee from a jail or starving !
Besides, he has the temper of a wolf.
He has been known to use a woman roughly !
Hurt her to vent his choler !—Such a man
To get thy sister's hand !

ALASCO.

It were bestow'd
Better than on the Prince,—disparity

Of rank, in those that wed, is dangerous.
In such relation there should be no debts,
Save those that are reciprocal, and which
Jars cannot call to mind ! Will the great Prince
Forget the peasant in the Prince's wife ?
Will life be all one honeymoon ? Believe
The temper is the sweetest—pain will turn it.
And that is of the body, or the mind ;
And sometimes is so sharp, it won't abide.
A comforter, but flouts the care would lull it !
So, for love's pains, gives love itself repulse ;
So, is its dulcet tongue harsh accents taught,
The least of which breaks its entrancing spell,
And wakens moods, to love, as clouds to sun !
Ah then the heart of woman, when she finds
The force her modest nature underwent
To make allow'd surrender of her charms,
Forgotten ! for the host of suing wishes
That won her slow consent, repugnance now,
Rebuke, reproach !—her lack of wealth or state
Cast into her teeth by him, who swore to her
A month ago her value beggar'd kingdoms !
So should it fare with my dear sister, gods !
How she would blanch and freeze to find a churl
In him she loved so dear, she quitted brother
And father for him ! I have had my humours,
Which her content has paid for, for a moment ;
And when she has reproach'd me, lovingly,
And found it only chafed me, she has wept—
But the first tear has thrown me on her neck.
Would it be so with him ?

RUPHINO.

'Twould not be so
With him thou lov'st,—Almagro.

ALASCO.

No, by my troth,
Because it could not be—Almagro is
Her equal. But behoves the Prince beware
He sports not with her tears, or drops may fall,
Lie nearer to the heart, from those he cherishes!
Let him beware! If there are towns and cities
In Arragon, so are there villages,
Which men inhabit, by the fresh breath of heaven
Nurtured more hardily than those who live
In streets and lanes, like convicts pent in mines,
Wasted with sweltering. Her first complaint
Would raise a cry for vengeance that would shake
His father from his throne!

RUPHINO.

Beware, my son;
The man who ever runs into extremes
Nine times in ten o'erlooks both right and reason,
That mostly lie between. This is again
Almagro! who would make thee common foe,
While, for himself, the greatest foe thou hast,
He nourishes the friend. Boy!—boy!—that man
Will bring thee into straits! For his own ends
He heaps up discontents 'gainst all above him,
To crush them with the weight—not for the hatred
He bears oppression, but for envy of it!
He blames the grievance he himself inflicts not;
But, let him have the power, you will see worse

Begot of his own pride and heartlessness !
I say no more, my son !—beware of him !
Where loiter'd you upon your journey home ?
Six weeks you have been gone ; ere one was past,
Your sister was proclaim'd the Prince's wife.

ALASCO.

I took a circuit home to see my friends,
And tell what I had done.

RUPHINO.

You're a great man
In Arragon !

ALASCO.

I number many friends !—
No word yet from my sister ?

RUPHINO.

I expect
Word by Velasquez—who is he comes yonder ?
I see but dimly !—I am very old—
Is it Velasquez ?

ALASCO.

Yes, Velasquez 'tis,
And looks like one who has a tale to tell.—

[VELASQUEZ *enters hastily—stops short on
seeing ALASCO.*]

How now, Velasquez ?

VELASQUEZ.

Are you there, Alasco ?

ALASCO.

Yes, I am here—the matter ?

VELASQUEZ.

Nothing !

ALASCO.

Something !

Your steps were hasty,—did you speed for nothing ?
Your breath is scanty,—was it spent for nothing ?
Your looks imply concern,—concern for nothing ?
Your road lay to my father,—seeing me
You stopp'd as bound to any other door !
Was that for nothing ?—Ay—and now you stand
Like one that's baulk'd about to take a leap
Which he felt sure to make—with bated crest,
With vigour chill'd, wann'd cheek, and sparkless eye !—
Do all these things mean nothing ?—if they do,
Then means commotion nothing !

VELASQUEZ.

I would be
Alone with your father.

ALASCO.

So I told you !—well,
You are alone with him.

[Goes out.

RUPHINO.

What is 't, Velasquez ?
Thou comest from the capital, and thence,
Or I mistake, thou bringest news for me.

VELASQUEZ.

I do ; and therefore wish'd thy son away ;
For he is rash ; and, gall'd, will take no road,
Save that his fury likes.

RUPHINO.

Bring'st thou me news
Would rouse the fury of my son, Velasquez ?
Thou mak'st me tremble—I am very old ;

Too old to hear bad news!—Don't tell it yet—
And yet I know what it is.—O Heaven! my daughter!
I knew no good could come of this avowal!
The Prince has used her ill!—and if he has,
Let him look to it!—Let him!—Three score years and ten,
'Gainst youth, are but a straw against a staff;
But, with no better, will I beard the man
That wrongs my daughter!—I grow strong, Velasquez;
Am waxing young again, as in my prime!
As I do live I am!—I thank thee, Nature!
To have left me strength!—I yet am worth a blow!—

[*Staggers.*]

I reel, Velasquez,—let me lean upon thee.

VELASQUEZ.

The Prince has done no wrong.

RUPHINO.

God bless the Prince!
And pardon me that I did wrong to him
In thinking that he had!—the gracious Prince
That ever honourably lov'd my child!—
How could I think that he could do her wrong!
Don't say I did so.—What's amiss, Velasquez?
I see 'tis nothing that affects my child:
Nought can go wrong, while the good Prince is near her.

VELASQUEZ.

He is no longer near her.

RUPHINO.

No!—not near her?
My dark surmises are at work again!
And yet thou say'st he has not wrong'd my child.

VELASQUEZ.

Thy child and he are wrong'd.

RUPHINO.

We'll right them, then !
Who did it ? —well ?

VELASQUEZ.

The King !

RUPHINO.

How ?—How ?

VELASQUEZ.

Despatch'd
The Prince to head his armies in the north,
And, when his back was turn'd, convoked his council,
And made them pass a formal act, declaring
The marriage of thy daughter null and void.

RUPHINO.

His right to his throne is void, if he breaks through
Religion and the laws that fence my child !
There are men in Arragon !—Alasco !—I
Have found my strength again ! Alasco !—Ay,
I am a peasant, he is a king ! Great odds !
But greater have grown even !—Why, Alasco !

Enter ALASCO.

ALASCO.

Here, father.

RUPHINO (*recollecting himself at sight of his son*).

O—I call'd you,—did I ?

ALASCO.

Yes.

RUPHINO.

I did it without thinking—well, Alasco ?

ALASCO.

Well, father?

You call'd me, and I know you wanted me.

Speak out, and do not fear my rashness, father:

Though there be cause for heat, I can be cool.

How pale you are! How you are quivering,

And how you gasp for breath! and your eyes look

As, would you let them, they could drown your cheeks!

Oh, my poor father!

RUPHINO.

Your poor sister, boy!—

[Bursts into tears, and falls on ALASCO'S neck.]

ALASCO.

What of my sister?—Say, Velasquez, for

My father can't, or won't.

Enter ALMAGRO, and a number of other Peasants.

ALMAGRO.

Alasco—news!

ALASCO.

Ay, now I'll hear it.

RUPHINO.

Tell it you, Velasquez!

Let it not come from him! He will heap fire

On fire.

VELASQUEZ.

Your sister is divorced, Alasco,

By edict of the men who guard the laws.

ALMAGRO.

Who break the laws!—Yes, the fair Prince Alonzo,—

Royal Alonzo!—weary of his wife—

Though but the waning of the honeymoon,

Only the waning—he were made of ice
Could think it more—on pretext of command
From the King to lead his armies—'Twas contrived—
A piece of villany at the first sight;—left her,
To cast her honourably from his bed!

RUPHINO.

Thou liest!

ALMAGRO.

(Furiously) Liest!

ALASCO.

Peace, Almagro!—Nay,
Scowl not upon my father! if you are angry
Brow me!

ALMAGRO.

My dear Alasco!

RUPHINO.

Dear!—how long?
The Prince did never you a double deed!
I would that I could say as much for thee!

ALMAGRO.

For me! *(Furiously.)*

ALASCO.

Again? May not an old man say
What he likes?

RUPHINO.

I would all young men spoke as true!

ALASCO.

Father! your child is sham'd! That horrid word
Written on her brow, thou'dst wish her dead ere read there:
Her!—me!—thyself!—all kith and kin thou hast!
And can thy breast find room for other cause

Of hate, reviling, or revenge? If it can,
Mine can't.

ALMAGRO.

No more can mine. I have no foes
Save those who wrong thy sister!—none will have!
Give me thy hand, Velasquez, and be friends.

VELASQUEZ.

I could be friends with him bespoke me foul;
I could be friends with him that gave me blow;
But with the friend who fail'd me in the need
He should, and could have help'd, I'll ne'er be friends.

ALMAGRO.

By heaven! Velasquez—(*furiously.*)

ALASCO.

Do you rage again?
Or did I dream you do? Friends! if not friends
Among yourselves, waive jars awhile for me!
Who is a caitiff, be it not the man
Laws civil and religious cannot bind?
Or what are prayers, if holy rites are threads,
And those they bind, asunder cut at will?
Or what is Heaven, if of no more esteem
Than what 'tis witness to, to be pronounced
A fraud and nullity? 'Tis sacrilege
If from the altar one abstract a mite,
And the offender dies; yet, by my troth,
It may be want that did the deed, not he,
And hunger breaks, they say, through walls of stone!
But what prompts him who mocks the altar, friends?
Pays to the compact 'tis appliance to

No grain of the respect he entertains
For bargains struck by hands 'cross market tables?
What, if not hell?—What should be done to such,
Ay, say he wore a crown?

ALMAGRO.

He should be stripp'd on't,—
Caged in a mine—yea, mulcted to the cost
Of his life!

RUPHINO.

O no—no—no! He should be made
To render back their rights to those from whom
He wrested them—no more. That's justice, sir;
The rest is vengeance, which belongs to Heaven,
Not sinful things like men!

ALASCO.

We'll master him,
Then deal with him.

RUPHINO.

My son, you will not then
Be masters of yourselves!

ALASCO.

No fear of us!
Come—to the villages! and every man
Call out his friends, and bring them where we'll meet
In one o'erwhelming mass!

PEASANTS.

Where?

ALASCO.

Let's consult!

[Retires a little with ALMAGRO and the rest.]

RUPHINO.

Back—back, Velasquez, as thou lovest me!
Back to the capital! find out my child!—

Apprise her of what's coming! She may need
To be upon her guard. I'll do as much
For thee. Meanwhile, I'll get me ready, friend,
And follow thee with all the speed I can.

[VELASQUEZ goes out.]

Oh, how I shake!—storms do not for old trees—
Time was I thought them puffs. I then was young.

ALASCO and ALMAGRO.

At the Cross!

[The rest echo them, exclaiming, "At the Cross!"]

ALMAGRO.

Now for redress of common grievances—
Burdens should not be borne—we'll cast them off!

PEASANTS.

We will!

ALMAGRO.

One signal wrong does better than
Tocsins, my friends, to call bold men to arms!

PEASANTS.

To arms!

RUPHINO.

Hear me, my boy!—Alasco! O, my son!—

ALASCO.

I am thy son, and for that very reason
I will not hear thee, while my sister suffers
An injury and a shame.—To arms! to arms!

[All except RUPHINO rush out, crying, "To arms! to arms!" RUPHINO totters into the cottage.]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

In the Citadel.

Enter the KING and ANDREAS.

KING.

What ! not the jewels that he gave her ?

ANDREAS.

No ;

Though o'er and o'er assur'd, in taking them,
She did your highness' will. Her wedding-ring
Was all she kept.

KING.

No murmurs ? No complaints ?

ANDREAS.

None ; but, instead, prayers for your highness' health,
And length of prosperous life !

KING.

She would be thought

A martyr : she has heard how such have suffer'd,
Blessing their persecutors ; and pretends
To imitate them ! 'Tis the way to make
Misfortunes profit us—especially
With the mean—to whom the pang still brings the wail.
It moves their wonder, and they worship that
They wonder at ! I warrant you she won,

With patient aspect, and undrooping mien,
More hearts to pity her, as she went forth,
Than tears and wringing of the hands had done !

ANDREAS.

She went not forth by the chief portal, but
A private one, and thereby shunn'd the crowd,
That fill'd the street with ferment.

KING.

By your care,
Or by her own ?

ANDREAS.

Her own, my gracious liege.

KING.

'Twas much forbearance ; but the girl is shrewd ;
She knows unlikely things may come to pass ;
The hardest heart may melt ; my mind may change
To bind more fast, what now I have unbound ;
Whereto she takes good heed no hindrance come,
Through lack of patience, now ! She is very wise !
Her beauty, past compare, must all allow.
Can she be blind to what all others see ?
And can she see it, without prizing it ?
The homeliest maid, I ever met with, thought
More of herself than she would seem to do.
She is very wise !—Aught said she of the Prince ?

ANDREAS.

No, not a word, but paused before she went,
Gazing upon his portrait strainingly.
I think, but am not sure, at first she wept,
For past her eyes, her kerchief once she drew ;

'Twas then put up, and, to her other hand,
The hand that held it, join'd in fervent clasp;
And thus she stood, the spirit, as I thought,
Of very prayer itself personified;
For o'er her face the cast which masters give,
To paint the act of beatific trance,
Spread, flooding it with light! whate'er she thought,
The words were in her heart.—She breathed no sound
Till she had made an end; as I inferr'd
From a deep sigh she drew; whereon she turn'd
With aspect heavenly calm, as worshippers,
That rise refresh'd, from the renewing altar.

KING.

You speak this heartily!

ANDREAS.

I speak the truth!

KING.

You say the Cortez, in last night's debate,
Made question of my faculty to break
This most pernicious marriage?

ANDREAS.

Many spoke
To that effect,—made it a pretext for
Rehearsal of old grievances.

KING.

What they
Call grievances!—Was there much heat?

ANDREAS.

There was:
But that within doors, cool to that without,
Where up and down the streets the people ran,

Women and men, but women frequentest,
Crying to one another, as they pass'd,
"The Rose of Arragon!"—"Fall Arragon
Ere she be trampled on!"—"No Rose, no King!"

KING.

Suspect you danger?

ANDREAS.

Yes, when discontents
Draw women out of doors, revolt is strong.

KING.

The garrison is under arms?

ANDREAS.

It is.

And, every quarter of an hour, patrols
Are sent into the town, to go the rounds,
And keep in check disorder, by the show
Of preparation and alacrity!

KING.

You have not yet gone forth?

ANDREAS.

Not yet, my liege;
I wait for Carlos, to report the state
And prospect of affairs. It is his hour—
And he at hand as soon.

KING.

Well, Carlos?

Enter CARLOS.

CARLOS.

All

Was quiet thro' the night; and, as the night,
I would aver the day were like to pass,

But for unwonted calm. An hour, or more,
'Tis past the time the shopkeeper should ope—
And he is up, but bides with shutters clos'd ;
The craft of the artificer stands still,
And yet he is awake since break of day—
The cries are silent on the crowdless streets ;
The very churls whose meals on errands wait
Stand not upon the watch for customers,
And breakfast-time at hand ! 'Tis market day—
And to the gates no troops of peasants come,
With garden-viands, flocks, or herds, or aught
Within the list of rustic merchandize.
None is at work, save the tir'd sentinel
Who paces, out and back, his beat ; on watch
'Gainst dangers yet unseen.

KING.

It cannot be !

CARLOS.

What cannot be, my liege ?

KING.

That they design
Revolt ?

ANDREAS.

There 's eight o'clock.

KING.

Hark, sirs !—The town
Is all at once astir ! What is 't ?—look out !

CARLOS.

Their houses, one and all the citizens
Have left, and throng the streets ;—their cloaks are on
Close-folded on their breasts ; they move one way,
As on one common object bent !

KING.

Descend :

Wait till your eye on some acquaintance falls,
Then call and question him. Go both of you——

[*Exeunt CARLOS and ANDREAS.*]

What is 't to be a King?—To govern?—Ay!
With such observance as the pilot meets,
Who thinks to rule the sea! not more perverse
Than moody, ever-changing subjects are!
Rejoicing in his helm, *As* ploughs along!
Leagues fleet like miles beneath his flying keel!
Before its time his port begins to loom!—
When takes him, right a-head; all unawares,
A furious shift of wind; which, if he 'scapes
From foundering, blows him, from his jocund course
A thousand miles away!—So with a King!
A month ago the war was popular;
My people's wishes with my army blew,
Which from the gates of Sarragossa march'd
'Mid shouts that would have made their cannon mute,
Suppose 'twere set to roar.—I was a god!
Knees bent to me as I retraced my steps,
Returning to my palace! All at once
The humour chang'd. From end to end the realm
Became one cauldron, ready to boil o'er
With discontents! A little more of heat
Was wanted only—that is now supplied!
The meanest sire in Arragon, suppose
His son, like mine, offended, would be free
To cast his bride and him to beggary!
But I must needs forbear, because—a King!——

Enter CARLOS.

Your tidings, Carlos?

CARLOS.

In our power we hold
The cause, if not the head of the revolt,
'That boldly now breaks forth!—Within the gates,
Acting in concert, as 'tis shrewdly guess'd,
With the malcontents,—The Rose of Arragon,
Attended by a peasant, new alighted,
With steed nigh spent, as through unwonted haste—
Has been surprised, made captive of, and now
Attends with those who guard her.

KING.

Did we straight
Decree her death, who could arraign our justice?
On pain of death, did we forbid return;
On her account defection menaces
Our throne! our life! and she, the cause, defies
Our warning and our wrath! To durance with her!

OLIVIA *without.*

OLIVIA.

The King! the King! As you are loyal men,
Bring me before him!

KING.

Is 't to me she comes?
Let her approach.

OLIVIA.

I must and will pass in!

[Rushes in and sinks exhausted before the KING,

VELASQUEZ following.

Forgive, my liege, the limbs that can't command

The homage they have all the heart to pay ;
And helpless throw themselves along the ground,
Instead of kneeling there !

KING.

How happens this ?

Girl, I could rail, but thy pale cheek disarms me !
What ! art thou scar'd to see the conflagration
Which thou thyself hast raised ? Or hast return'd
To Sarragossa, whence I banish'd thee,
To fan the discontent that takes thy part ;
And, now thou art detected, mak'st pretence
On my account thou art here ?

OLIVIA.

I could not play,
My liege, a double part ! I know not how !
On your account alone I brave your frown ;
Which tho' it held the lightning's power to blast
Should not prevent me, for thy health and life
To crawl to thee ! to clasp thy knees ! and, with
A heart as full of love as loyalty,
To warn thee of thy danger !

KING.

Loyalty !
And love !—What love ?

OLIVIA.

O can you not conceive
Love may be cherish'd, for another's sake,
Towards those who pay us back no grain of love—
Nay, pay us hate instead ?—'Tis true, my liege !
Indeed, indeed ! 'tis true !—My heart's dear lord
You have taken from me !—Cross the contract which

Gave him to me, drawn pen !—torn off the seal !—
Stripp'd me to the skin, as 'twere, and cast me forth !—
Yet, could my life this moment stead you,—stand
In the place of yours, and yours were forfeited,
Assuring yours to you—so tender is
The love I bear you, for my dear lord's sake,—
I would not look at it, ere I would lay it down !

KING.

What wouldst thou gain by such a sacrifice ?

OLIVIA.

Content of mine own heart !—and having that,
I would bless Heaven and die.

KING.

This is romance,
Whose forms are of the brain ;—but, look for them
In act, you find them not ; no more than shadows
Which mock the hand would grasp them.

OLIVIA.

Take a proof !

KING.

Ay, canst thou give me one ?

OLIVIA.

I come not back
Rebelliously to Sarragossa, whence
I went with but obedience in my heart.
If you except my love for my dear lord—
I had no thought, save of the arms I had left ;
And those, my father's, I was going to.

KING.

What made thee then return ?

D

OLIVIA.

My fears for thee!

Roused by the danger thou'rt environ'd with.

KING.

How couldst thou see the thing that was behind thee;
That had not broken forth till thou wast gone!

OLIVIA.

I speak, my liege, of fears that were before me,
With word of which, this friend prevented me,
Instructed by my father!—Arragon,
As well as Sarragossa, is in arms;
Taking advantage of the distant war
Which leaves your kingdom weak.—Not your throne only,
Your life is threaten'd; so, did I return
Against thy will, to warn thee for thy safety,
To urge thee to consult it; which to do,
Flight must embrace this moment!—wouldst thou fly,
To fly along with thee—thy hostage only!—
And wouldst thou not, to die along with thee!

KING.

What proof have I of this!

OLIVIA.

That I am here!

What! dear my liege, won't you believe me still?

A simple villager had ta'en my word!

Who would be great, when greatness breeds mistrust?

My liege! my liege!—I am no courtier's child;

My father ne'er had need to hide his heart,

So ne'er had thought to teach me to hide mine;

And though I have heard men speak and think diverse,

The act I never yet could comprehend ;
But, when their lips were open'd, listen'd still,
To hear their hearts !—What cause should bring me back
Except your health,—your safety ?—Oh my liege !
Is it the roof whence, banishing my lord,
You banish'd me enough ? is it the ban
Whence you divorced me, not content with that ?
Is it the face, which when I saw it last,
Transfix'd me with a look that wish'd me dead,
And almost struck me so ?—What were the words
Of him who spoke your will to me ?—“ *On pain
Of death never to see this place more !* ”
I see it !—I incur the penalty !
My life is forfeit—take it !—Save thy own !
The only end that brought me back again !

KING.

I must believe her ;—yet can I believe
Deeds worthy richest blood, can live without ?—
Incredible !—Yet true !—Well, Carlos,—well ?—

Enter CARLOS.

Hast met with those, can tell thee what's afoot ?

CARLOS.

No, my good liege, save by surmises.

KING.

Well ;
And what surmise your friends ?

CARLOS.

Some outbreak of
The citizens ! But we can master them.

KING.

Yes, we can master Sarragossa!—but
There is fear of Arragon.

Enter GOMEZ.

GOMEZ.

The citizens
And troops contend to hold the city gates,
Which now the peasantry beset in throngs,
As on some festal day, but not with looks
Pertaining to a feast.

OLIVIA.

Sirs! if you are men,
Persuade the King to fly—not Sarragossa,
But Arragon, on treason is intent!
And, thereunto, moves hither all its power,
With threats pernicious to the life of the King.

VELASQUEZ.

Fly! fly, my liege!

GOMEZ.

The subterranean vault
That, from the Castle, leads without the walls,
Wide from the quarter whence this tempest breaks—
That gain'd, you are safe!

ANDREAS.

The soldiery give way!

[From window.]

KING.

I will not fly!—Girl, you have told me truth!
Consult your safety,—join your friends,—leave me!

OLIVIA.

I will not quit your side,—I have a brother
Will hear his sister's voice; friends, that will hear it.

Whate'er betide, my life I link with yours !
Both shall survive, or both one ruin share !

KING.

Girl, are you flesh and blood ?

OLIVIA.

No, but a rock !

Stand back !

[*Meeting ALMAGRO, and others entering.*

ALMAGRO.

The King himself!—This crowns our work,
Our expedition in his death complete.—
Upon him !

OLIVIA.

Hold ! he is my prisoner !
And I have guaranteed his life !—Take mine
If you choose, Almagro.—If you don't, spare his,
Or you *shall* take my life.—Well were it said
The Rose of Arragon kept not her word ;
When every Spanish woman, who deserves
To bear her father's name, respects her pledge !
These are my friends, Almagro, more than yours !
They are my brother's friends yet more than mine !
They have mothers, sisters, loves or wives, Almagro !
They will respect my bidding for *their* sakes.

ALMAGRO.

For your sake come I hither.

OLIVIA.

And I thank you.
And, for the good you mean me, will not shame you :
Nor, countrymen and friends, will I shame you,

And leave it to your enemies to say,
While you stood by, I broke a *Spaniard's* word !

ALMAGRO.

Suffer ye, friends, a woman thus to thwart you ?

OLIVIA.

Almagro, who is with you ?—who is leader ?

ALMAGRO.

Your brother

OLIVIA.

Wait his orders, then !

ALMAGRO.

I do them !

OLIVIA.

No, on my honour !—by his father's honour !—
His own ! He seeks but justice of the King,
No drop of the King's blood ! He loves his sister,
But yet he is the subject of the King !
He is a patriot—no regicide !

ALMAGRO.

Friends, do you halt half way ? Why come ye hither ?
Why are your swords in your hands ? You are standing
here—
There stands the King, and lives !

CORTEZ. NUNEZ.

He should not live !

ALMAGRO.

Who seconds me ? (*going to advance.*)

[OLIVIA *throws herself upon the KING.*]

OLIVIA.

Come on, then, if you will ;
My word, you hear, is pledged to save the King !

Either respect my pledge, or see me die !
Around the King's life thus do I wind my own ;
If not a safeguard, then a sacrifice !

ALASCO (*without*).

Olivia !

OLIVIA.

Here, Alasco!—Speed, my brother !
Here—here !—he comes ! Now to touch the King, who
dares ?

ALASCO *rushes in, followed by others.*

My sister !

OLIVIA.

Ay, my brother !

ALASCO.

How ! the King !

[*Uncovering.*

KING.

Your sovereign, sir !—Are you his subject, or
A traitor ? If a traitor, in his blood
Consummate what you have begun,—whereto
He lends you his own sword !

[*Throws down his sword, scornfully.*

Sirs, sheathe your blades ! With loyal hearts like yours
The King commands, as long as the King lives !
In strife like this—not strife but butchery—
You shall not stain your blades !

ALASCO.

My liege, except
What's shed without, no blood shall flow to-day.
Sheathe your swords, comrades, Sarragossa's won !
To custody the King will condescend
To render up his person. You, Velasquez,

Will in safe wardship see the King bestow'd.
Your heads uncover'd, sirs !—'tis Majesty,
Though it be fallen in fortunes—

*[The KING and others retire, guarded by VELASQUEZ
and Peasants—all uncover as he goes off.]*

Come, Olivia,

Sister, you are no offcast now :—Sit there :

[Takes her to the throne, and places her upon it.]

You are the Prince's wife. Till he comes back
And owns her such, the King allowing it,
And, to our grievances, giving full redress,
Who should be Regent, brothers ?—who, if not
The Rose of Arragon !

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Street in Sarragossa.

Enter RUPHINO and VELASQUEZ.

RUPHINO.

The people meet to-day ! Who summon'd them ?

VELASQUEZ.

That have I yet to learn ; no proclamation,
Notice, affix'd on the accustom'd quarters,
Calls them together ; yet from mouth to mouth
The rumour runs, they meet.

RUPHINO.

No whisper who
Convokes them ?

VELASQUEZ.

Some say one, and some another.
But still, with one and all, alike conjecture.

RUPHINO.

Knows this Alasco ?

VELASQUEZ.

Him I have not seen.

RUPHINO.

Alasco loses ground. He is nobody !
Cortez and Nunez, who were yesterday

Alasco's hinds, to-day are better men—
Rated as the things for which they pass themselves.
We do know gold—not men ! The coin that 's spurious
Won't pass with one in twenty!—out of twenty
Take one, you scarcely the proportion leave,
Who, for the sterling man, will take the base !
Opinion lords it ! Let but the cheat keep close,
Take heed the wash conceals the brass or lead,
The stamp and colour carry it !—we do ring gold,
We do not so with men, but trust report,
Or sight ; and hence the coiner swamps the mint !
So where base metal stops, the counterfeit
Of human nature passes !

VELASQUEZ.

Bitter truths !
There is Almagro ! nothing is too high
For his o'er-reaching insolence, which his craft
Passes for the aspiring of desert !
Whereto he gathers those around him, whom
Display and luxury corrupt—who leave
His board high flush'd, to publish, in his praise,
The flatteries he himself doth hint to them.
This will not yet thy son Alasco see,
Who in his singleness of nature hugs
A foe, the very worst the man can cope with
Who deals with such a partner as Almagro !
Take you Alasco, any day in the year,
He is the same !—no change of bearing waits
On change of circumstance—his station mounts,
Not he !—His peasant's dress he still keeps on,
Though arbiter of the fate of Arragon !

This balks, and all at fault doth set the crowd,
Who still the flimsy shows of things affect
More than the things themselves ; while, by a course
Diverse, Almagro gathers hosts of friends !
Behoves that man be watch'd !

RUPHINO

Here comes Almagro,
Cortez and Nunez too !—My heart forebodes
Some mischief is afoot ! You will attend
This meeting, will you not ?

VELASQUEZ.

Be sure I shall.
The hour draws nigh.

RUPHINO.

I shall attend it too,
Though somewhat frail to thread the jostling mass.
Observe my friend—so deep are they in converse,
They note us not ! They are plotting, my Velasquez !

[*They go out.*

Enter ALMAGRO, CORTEZ, and NUNEZ.

ALMAGRO.

The man who takes the lead in troublous times,
Would need a certain toughness of the heart,
To withstand the dint of Pity,—not give way
At her instances, which ever thwart the course
Of just severity.—Now such a man,
Methinks, Alasco is not ;—a good man !
A perfect man, in the gentler elements
Wherein our nature's founded ; but without
Those sterner ones, which render action safe,
To those therein committed.

CORTEZ.

You are right ;
He is too good !

ALMAGRO.

A man may be too good !
'Twas fit the King should die ! Strong measures suit
Bold enterprises ! steps that startle men !
Deeds that commit the actors thoroughly !
Which defy halting ; far more, turning back ;
That fear itself takes risk for counsellor,
And in the track of doing bustles on !
For though one end combineth many minds,
Yet, of those many, few—perhaps but one—
Can calculate the means unto that end,
The road to it, which ever is to make ;
Which some like straight, and others roundabout ;
Which some would travel wet, and others dry ;
Which some would take by day, and some by night ;
Which some would trudge, and others roll along !
Thus, if all go together, one must lead ;
That all go safe, he must know how to lead ;
He must be brains, and heart, and limbs for all !
I fear Alasco scarce is such a man.

NUNEZ.

'Tis clear he is not.

CORTEZ.

See what he has done !
Spared the King's life, wherein our grievance lay !

ALMAGRO.

Wherein our peril lies,—not only that
Our grievance may return with fourfold weight,

But heavy penalty be undergone
For the free breath that we have dared to draw !

CORTEZ.

Talk you of penalty ?

ALMAGRO.

Of penalty.

For see our plight :—the power we have unseated,
Is old in stratagem—has stuck at nought
To keep the upper hand :—is perfected
In subtlety to undermine the heart
And make the conscience crumble till its scruples
Are swallow'd quick as water is by sand !
The King's a prisoner !—what then ? A cage
Lets out as well as in !—no fool but knows
There are more keys than one to every door,
And, failing keys, picklocks and sledges work !
And what are guards, but watchers must be watch'd !
While those who watch them may be bad as they,
And need their watchers too !—Nought that partakes
Of flesh and blood is all dependable !
“ Last life, live hope.”—Ay, while there runs a spark
Among the embers !—There's no bondage, then,
That's end of hope, but death, with which life ends !
While the King lives, there's hope for tyranny,
And, peradventure, there's despair for us !

NUNEZ.

If he escapes, we are lost.

ALMAGRO.

Not all of us.

Alasco is not lost who spared the King !
Were I a man who saw with other eyes

Than those of partial love, thus might I say—
“ Well done, Alasco !—how the fair world goes !
Honesty has no chance in it !—makes a noose
For its own neck, e’en of the self-same springe
That knavery poaches with !”—I’d slay the man
That call’d Alasco knave !—yet thus a man
Who loved him not might say—“ A day ago
Alasco was a traitor like myself,
Like you, and every one of us !—his neck
Was debtor to the noose !—but mark,—the death
Of the king, which he along with us conspir’d,
And which proposing only, we did pawn
Our lives and all to fortune, by a cast
To be redeem’d or lost ; he makes assurance
Of safety, enrich’d by such prosperity,
As of his tallest hopes, a month ago,
Makes pigmies now !—saves the King’s life !—Good sooth,
Some men see far,—can calculate most shrewdly
The course of consequences !—I had studied
An hour, or more, methinks, ere I had seen
The way to the King’s favour was to put
His life in jeopardy.”—You know I speak
Not as myself, but as another man !
I love Alasco, and, with care for him,
I contemplate his acts with others’ eyes—
Or rather strive to do so—much I fear,
In their regards, his mercy to the King
Seems favour to himself.

NUNEZ.

And yet he keeps
The King in durance !

ALMAGRO.

True.

NUNEZ.

How thereupon
Shall he acquit himself to the King?

ALMAGRO.

How?

NUNEZ.

Yes.

ALMAGRO.

By laying it to our charge; to which, no doubt,
He to the King sets down his threaten'd life!—
Heard'st what one said to me, when that I urged
Which you urge now—a shrew'd far-sighted man?

CORTEZ.

What did he say?

ALMAGRO.

“Alasco spares the King,
Thereby incensing us, too chafed thereat
To brook the further step—setting the King
At liberty!”—Do you see?—“On our account
He keeps the King in durance—for himself
He would set him free to-morrow!”—Do you see?
“He makes his sister Regent,—What is she?
The wife of the Prince, the King's son!—Very well!
Where is the Prince?—On the frontier with the army.
Where will he be a month hence, when he learns
The state of Sarragossa?—At her gates
With other knocks than beggars give for alms
Besieging them; which we would treat like beggars!—
But worse than thousand foes, without the camp,

Is one that lurks within it!—He gains entrance!—
He sets his father on the throne again,
His wife ascended but to render up;—
Alasco is the brother of his wife;
Alasco the preserver of the King;
Alasco of his treason is assoil'd;
His fault transmuted into his desert;
His sister royal consort for his sake;
Himself adopted, cherish'd, help'd to climb;
While we, his instruments, which when he used
He cast side, obtain for our deserts
The dungeon, or the gallies, or the scaffold!"
Now do you see?

CORTEZ.

How well you argue it!

ALMAGRO.

I, my dear friend!—I only tell you what
Another said—I did not argue so.
How could I, loving good Alasco?—Love
With all mankind is blindness, more or less!

CORTEZ.

Would we had made you Regent!—

ALMAGRO.

Had you done so,
Thus far at least you had been safe—your ends
Had been my own!

NUNEZ.

And why not Regent now?

CORTEZ.

The law is now the people's will—the people
To-day assemble—Nunez, you and I

Repair to the place of meeting, and at once
Propose Almagro Regent !

ALMAGRO (*affecting surprise*).

Do the people
Assemble to-day ?

CORTEZ.

They do.

ALMAGRO.

You much surprise me !
And wherefore friends ?

NUNEZ.

You do forget, to ask.

ALMAGRO.

Do I,—I must, when you assert I do !

NUNEZ.

Recall, good sir, what yesternight you said—
“ Behoved the people meet more frequently :
That none could tell the day, or hour, their voices
Might save the liberties of Arragon.”

ALMAGRO.

Something to that effect I now recall.

CORTEZ.

To that effect we lost no time, but set
Your friends at once to work ; who so contrived,
The people act, as of their own accord,
Nor know the springs that move them.

ALMAGRO.

Admirable !
A master-stroke, indeed, of policy !

CORTEZ.

Come, Nunez, come ! Almagro shall be Regent !

[*Exeunt* CORTEZ and NUNEZ.

ALMAGRO.

Gods, what a giant is the mass, in act !
In reason what a child !—I shall be Regent !
They think Alasco traitor ! Honesty,
Thou know'st thy thanks ! Sweat on !—Alasco is honest ;
Means all men fairly, as he means himself ;
Is true to the cause ; would fetter his own limbs,
To give immunity to the meanest man's
That has embraced it ;—yet is he a traitor !
Why so should all men fare, who think they live
But for the world, and not the world for them.
I am Alasco's friend !—yes, on the terms
I have been friend to many another man,
To friend myself !—Apart from that, Alasco
Is such a man as jars my nature most :
A trusting lover of the common race ;
Looks to another's good before his own ;
Never suspects that men may cheat, betray ;
Much less that they might swear themselves his friends,
And cut his throat, as I almost could do,
But for this cause, had I no other reason,
That people say, and not his friends alone,
I have fattened on his credit !—For the tax
My pride has paid him there—he shall pay galling !
Yet will I keep awhile the mask on, for
The passion that consumes me, drinks my blood up,
And prompts defiance both of earth and heaven
To compass the possession of his sister !

He is at hand!--now to receive my friend—
Welcome, Alasco!

ALASCO *enters.*

ALASCO.

Welcome every hour
That brings me to my friend.

ALMAGEO (*with overacted energy*).

I *am* thy friend.

ALASCO.

It were believed without that emphasis!
Is anything wrong? Require I now a friend
More than at any other time?

ALMAGRO.

O no!

ALASCO.

Almagro, more is written on thy brow
Than thou think'st meet to trust thy tongue withal!
That smile's too thin! I can see through it, man!
It comes from the head, and not the heart; the which
'Tis meant to hide, not show!

ALMAGRO.

Doubt'st thou my truth?

ALASCO.

Ay—thou'rt in earnest now! In honest earnest!
Thou think'st, indeed, I do!—My own Almagro,
I am too clear myself, to doubt thy truth
Or any other man's, unless, indeed,
Upon most cogent reason. Listen to me!—
There are not wanting those who love me well,
Whom I love well, that have essay'd to shake

My faith in thee. When saw'st thou it was shaken?
Have I not still return'd to thee, my friend,
With open face and heart? Thou hast borne me hard,
Too hard, in sooth, to justify endurance
In any but a brother; till I have felt
My tingling fingers coiling in my palm!—
O had I struck thee then;—but, at the thought
Of blow to thee, I could have struck myself,
And never parted we at such a time;
But I have held to thee my open palm
As frank as now I do!

ALMAGRO (*with an effort*).

As frank I take it.

ALASCO.

What is the matter, man? I do not feel
The pressure of your hand as I was wont;
Ay, there it is! but comes upon the hint.
It used to come without! Man! you are thinking
Of something else than me; or else of me,
In other mood than you were wont to think,
Have I done anything?

ALMAGRO.

No.

ALASCO.

No? that's right.

What is it, then?

ALMAGRO.

What?

ALASCO.

What!—come! come! you know
There's something. What is it?

ALMAGRO.

'There is no satisfying
The people !

ALASCO.

Now 'tis coming ! Well ?—go on !

ALMAGRO.

'They are jealous of you.

ALASCO.

Jealous, are they ?—why ?

ALMAGRO.

Because you spared the King.

ALASCO.

I never thought
To harm the King.

ALMAGRO.

No ?

ALASCO.

No !

ALMAGRO.

I thought you did !

ALASCO.

You thought I did ?—what ! take his life, and he
In our power ?—lose my own first !—While he was free,
While he was able to dispute with us,
His power to oppress, and ours to right ourselves ;
The argument indeed, was life or death !
'That 's over !—at an end !—Take the King's life ?
I'd slay the man that talk'd of touching it !

ALMAGRO.

What did you then propose ?

ALASCO.

What I set out with !

Assurance of my sister's nuptial rights,
And full redress of the people's grievances.

ALMAGRO.

Which you will get! (*ironically.*)

ALASCO.

Will get? be sure, I will!

ALMAGRO.

Our friends believe they had been perfected
In the King's death.

ALASCO.

Our friends believe like fools!—
I'll not say knaves!—Is not the King our hostage?
Where lies his value? Is it in his life,
Or in his body, only?—While his friends
Believe they risk his life, to strike at ours,
Will they be quick to come to blows!—or rather
Will they not seek a parley?—treat with us?—
Listen to our terms?—award them their due weight?
Grant them?—upon the Gospels ratify
A treaty with us, sworn to by the King himself?
Take the King's life!

ALMAGRO.

Would I had thought of this
An hour ago!

ALASCO.

Why?

ALMAGRO.

I had been prepared
To justify you to the people.

ALASCO.

Pshaw !
I'll justify myself.

ALMAGRO.

I know him not,
He is positive when into action prick'd.
I have err'd in rating him too much a child,
And over-reach'd myself—I must recover,
With the hold I have upon his love for me.
Alasco !

ALASCO.

Well !

ALMAGRO.

Methinks was never pair
So link'd in love as we are ! We should have been
Brothers !

ALASCO.

And we are so !—are we not ?
The worth of birth is but the right to love.
We love as well as brothers, do we not,
Without that right ?—what are we then but brothers ?
Come you to flesh and blood ?—as all mankind
Had but one parentage, in the great first,
All flesh and blood are one !

ALMAGRO.

Yet there 's a nearness
In affinity.

ALASCO.

Marry yes,—for cuffs as well
As huggings !—Brothers have been haters !—From
One womb spring many natures, as diverse
As the winds, the children of the common air !

ALMAGRO.

Alasco, you did wish me once your brother
By such a tie, as would have yet enrich'd
Our ample stock of love.

ALASCO.

I did.

ALMAGRO.

The Prince,
Thwarting my hopes, methinks scarce ran with thine,
Or I deceive myself.

ALASCO.

You are not deceived,
And know it—wherefore make a doubt of it?

ALMAGRO.

Our surest wishes sometimes make them doubts,
Through wantonness to reassure themselves!
I should have been the husband of Olivia!

ALASCO.

You should!—you had been, had my will been done.

ALMAGRO.

I know your power was beggar to your will,
Whose vast abundance mock'd its penury!
Now haply turn'd to riches!—Friendship is
A godlike thing!

ALASCO.

'Tis perfect in itself!

So has the start of love, that 's not content
Without its guerdon rich; to purchase which,
Crowns have been lost, and what surpasses them,
The grace of which they are but symbolical!
Whence blossoms richer than the garden's prime,

Supposing e'en the Hesperian fable truth,
Have broke their golden promise, and for fruit,
Given all their glorious hues to nourish poison !
But friendship, save its mood, seeks no delight :
Therein it all rejoices !—temperate —
Without the fiery throbbings of the brain,
And beatings of the heart !—unjealous—pleas'd
To gather hearts for those it cherishes,
And of its own, making a goodly field,
Where nothing springs, but healthy generous seed,
Fair thoughts, pure feelings, sentiments sublime,
To justify and grace its lov'd election !

ALMAGRO.

Friends have done miracles for those they lov'd.

ALASCO.

They have !—I wonder, my Almagro, what
I would not do for thee ?

ALMAGRO.

There was a thing
You might have done, and did not.

ALASCO.

What was it ?

ALMAGRO.

You knew I lov'd !

ALASCO.

I did, and help'd your love,
Far as I could.

ALMAGRO.

Not so, Alasco !

ALASCO.

No ?

ALMAGRO.

You urged my suit, indeed, but not methinks
With all that sturdy earnestness you ow'd me ;
Gav'st way too soon to a girl's fantasy,
And an old man's inclining !

ALASCO.

Did I ?

ALMAGRO.

Yes.

ALASCO.

I am sorry you should think so !

ALMAGRO.

I am sorry
I should have cause to think so.—Look, Alasco :
Had I a sister and my friend did love her,
Her wishes should incline the way I chose
Howe'er they strain'd diversely !

ALASCO.

Ay !—indeed ?
I think you are wrong !—a woman in affection
Is steadfastness, or steadfastness is nothing,
And they are fools who seek it..

ALMAGRO.

They are fools
Who in the heart of very weakness, think
To find so stern a thing.

ALASCO.

Almagro !

ALMAGRO.

Nay,
I know I speak harsh truths to you ; and yet,

Did I speak harsher, I'm your fastest friend !
Where was your sister's love for you, Alasco,
When she repell'd the suit you urg'd for me ?
Sisters love brothers, don't they ?

ALASCO.

Yes.

ALMAGRO.

Methinks
Behoves such love be steadfast.

ALASCO.

Certainly.

ALMAGRO.

You pleaded for your friend with all your heart.

ALASCO.

With all my heart and soul, Almagro.

ALMAGRO.

Nay,
I'm sure you did—I am content you did—
But had been more so with the proof of it.

ALASCO.

What proof would you have ?

ALMAGRO.

What proof would I have ?—Success !
The only solid proof of earnestness !

ALASCO.

Almagro !—

ALMAGRO.

Yes, I know—your sister's heart
Was given to the Prince—That 's past and gone, Alasco !
The heyday of their love is over, now !

From her deserted bed she now looks back
Upon the day he knelt to woo her thither,
Who leaves her now alone there !

ALASCO.

Well, Almagro ?

ALMAGRO.

Thy sister is divorc'd.

ALASCO.

They say she is.

ALMAGRO.

What hinders her to be Almagro's wife ?

ALASCO.

Heav'n !—her own heart !—her father's honour !—mine !—
Don't touch me there, Almagro.

ALMAGRO.

Touch thee there ?

Who touch'd thee there ?—If she 's divorc'd, she 's free.

ALASCO.

If she 's divorc'd against her husband's will,
If she 's divorc'd without her own default,
If she 's divorc'd and yet the contract good—
Perfect, without a flaw, that made her wife ;
She is not free, Almagro !—She should die
Before she married thee !—What would you call
My sister ?—What was she ?—The paramour
Of the Prince ?—What ! mean you she was that the which
Did any call her, he would put his tongue
In jeopardy, for by this honest hand
I would tear it from his throat !—Have a care, Almagro !
Men tell me thou art selfish—thou didst come
Too near a proof just now, in thine own aims,

To overlook the honour of thy friend !
Almagro, I'm a child, but yet a man !
Let me not find thee, what men say thou art—
Assured of that I would hate thee—I, Almagro !—
That never look'd upon my fellow flesh
Without a kindness and a care for it !

ALMAGRO.

I know it is thy nature.

[Changing his tone.]

ALASCO.

I have bragg'd ;
But if I have, I have said the simple truth,
And, after all, where is the boast ?—At best,
We are but what heav'n made us. By no thought
Or labour of my own, I love my race,
Confide in them, and would do good to them !
It is the bias of my nature, which
Slept in my cradle, in the school-room wak'd,
And all throughout my manhood has held sway,
To joy in others' thriving !—When deserv'd—
Mark that !—I would not have pretension thrive
When not borne out by merit—'tis as bad
As that a lie should prosper !—Barring that,
I fare the best when I see others banquet ;
Nor care to scramble for the upper seats
At fortune's table—I have given them up,
More oft, than I have ta'en them ;—nor can I bear,
Except in the sheer lack of worthiness,
To turn my back on men who have their faults,
Because, who has them not ?—I am sure not I !—
One kind of man alone I cannot brook—

The man whose God is self!—But one such man,
I bless heaven fervently, I have ever known!
And I as fervently do pray to it,
I ne'er may know another!—Let this pass—
You say the people are displeas'd with me
Touching the King. Is that all?

ALMAGRO.

Something more—
Affecting your fair sister.

ALASCO.

What can it be?
Think you I err'd to make my sister Regent?

ALMAGRO.

Some soreness thereupon.

ALASCO.

I thought it right;
But if our friends think otherwise, 'tis well!
I care not who is Regent, so the course
Of things holds on.

ALMAGRO.

I am glad you are of that mind.
They meditate a change.

ALASCO.

A change?—indeed!

ALMAGRO.

And steps are taken to assemble them,
And learn their will and pleasure.

ALASCO.

Steps are taken?
Why was not I consulted?

ALMAGRO.

You are too easy,

Too lax in the exacting of your rights !
Men take advantage of you !—to say truth,
I ne'er divin'd you cared to be consulted,
Else had I put a clog upon their speed,
Had check'd its downhill swiftness.

ALASCO.

I'm not pleas'd—
And yet the people could not mean me wrong.
Come, come, all's well !

Enter VELASQUEZ, CORTEZ, and NUNEZ, with People.

VELASQUEZ.

Well met, Alasco !

CORTEZ.

And—

Well met, Almagro.— We have an errand, sirs,
To both of you. The people are divided—
Half wish Almagro Regent, half Alasco ;
All holding the same mind in this regard,
That, in the strait we stand in, it is fit
That one of you should hold the rule, and not
Alasco's sister. Which of you will give
His vote to place the other in her seat ?

VELASQUEZ.

What do you say, Almagro ?

ALMAGRO.

Good Velasquez,
I am taken by surprise.

ALASCO.

And so am I ;
But I can speak at once—Almagro Regent !

ALL.

Almagro Regent !

RUPHINO *rushes in.*

RUPHINO.

No, no, no !—Alasco,
What have you done ? I follow'd hither, fast
As my old limbs could bear me—but too late !
O son !—son—son ! thy father's voice ascends
Against thy mad devotion to that man !
Whom now thy breath hath seated in command,
But to unseat, ere long, will call for blood !
O that in even balance should be held
The claims of virtue and depravity ;
Of truth and falsehood ; generosity ;
And overweening heartless selfishness ;
That the weak, good, in its simplicity,
Should cast its weight into the other scale,
And heave its own to the beam !—Friends—countrymen—
Undo what you have done !

ALASCO.

It is too late.

RUPHINO.

Still faithful 'gainst thyself !

ALMAGRO.

Ruphino !—Sir !—
As to your years, with which your worth has grown,
Behoves me pay all reverence—observe
The first use which I make of that same power
Which you begrudge me hold. If I, at home,
Do sit supreme, Alasco, rule abroad ;
And next to thee, Velasquez ; whom, the more

He is bent to be my foe, the more will I
E'en as a friend entreat.

NUNEZ.

'Tis nobly said !

ALMAGRO.

Away, Alasco ! join the patriot host,
And take Velasquez with thee ;—thou, the chief ;
He, second in command.—My friend, embrace.
How say you, sir ? Am I a man for thee
Or him to fear ?—Health and success, my friend !
You, to bright gains ; honours, and spoils of war !
I, to the care and drudgery of the state !

[Goes out, followed by the people shouting.]

RUPHINO.

This day, my son, we both shall recollect.

VELASQUEZ.

Alasco, come.

RUPHINO.

Till evening wait, Velasquez.
Methinks you have forgot your sister, boy :
If not to take farewell, a word or two
Behoves you change with her before you go.
His sister would have speech with him, Velasquez !

ALASCO.

Husband your speed, Velasquez, till I join you.

VELASQUEZ.

Nay, we shall start together ; say an hour
Ere sunset. At the postern with your steed
An hour ere sunset shall you find me waiting.

Not till you join me shall I sally forth,
But wait for you at the postern with your steed.

[VELASQUEZ goes out.]

RUPHINO.

What ponder you, Alasco?

ALASCO.

Nothing.

RUPHINO.

Son!

You are not ill?

ALASCO.

No, no! Lead to my sister.

[They go out.]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Corridor of the Dungeons.

Enter ALONZO, disguised as a Moor, accompanied by PEDRO.

ALONZO.

And so you knew me not, till, with the old
Familiar word and tone, I greeted you ?

PEDRO.

No, my good lord ; and now I look and wonder,
Knowing who you are, yet not a sign descreying
Of what so well I know.

ALONZO.

Past hope !—Good Pedro,
With an entire unmeasur'd confidence
I trusted you ; and you have paid me back
With equal faith !—I thank you !—What you tell me,
'Touching my father, all disquiet lulls,
Which it behoves a son to feel ; and, now,
I am at liberty to be all the husband !
My plans are laid, old friend ; and, certain as
To-morrow's dawn is coming, ere it comes,
There will be shaking hands in Sarragossa
With those who brood to-day o'er nought but blows.
Meanwhile bethink thee of a trusty few
To back us, should extremity require.

PEDRO.

I shall, my lord. They can be found and quickly !

ALONZO.

For my dear wife, I will not trust myself
In neighbourhood with her, lest my strong love
Betray me ; but shall take the post thou speak'st of,
Near this Almagro ; so thou pass me for
The man he said he needed. If from the instruments
Which men make use of, we can guess their callings,
Methinks I guess the work he has in hand,
To wish for such a man !—Come, bring me to him.

PEDRO.

No ; tarry here, and he shall come to you.
He so appointed.

ALONZO.

Be it so, old friend— [PEDRO goes out.
No place so strange as home, when ours no more !
These vaults, familiar since I was a child,
No longer look the same.—Good honest Pedro !
The mis-placed executioner ! 'Tis strange !
Use hardens men as to their crafts ; while, else,
Their natures all their primal softness keep
Obedient to impression. The hard jailer
Without a shrug, sees misery pass his gate ;
The common current of his vocation there
Still rolling on the same—but take him thence,
He has his share of pity for a pang ;
Yea, pays it down in good and sterling tears !
I have seen it ! Pedro, now, is such a one—
The rack, the gibbet, and the block, to him
Are things of custom, whose abhorred uses

Find him their fit intendant, of whose frame
No fibre they disturb. My boyhood's dread
Was Pedro; till, one day, he lifted me
Cast flat along the pavement—in my speed
To shun him.—I was bleeding;—as he staunch'd
My little wounds, how well I recollect
The change from terror to pleas'd wonderment,
To see a heart, as tender as my mother's,
Melting above me from his big dark eye!
“ You would not hurt me, Pedro?” said I, still
A touch of doubt remaining.—“ Hurt thee, boy!”
He said no more, but where his tongue stopp'd short
His eye went on, and told a tale to me
That had a weeping close—Though only then
I guess'd its tenor—but I learn'd it after.
An only son, of just my age, he had,
And lost him!—From that hour I lov'd the man,
And could confide my life, and my life's all,
To him, as now I do. He has succeeded!
He comes—the Regent with him.—Heaven, I thank you!
The post is mine which it behoves me hold
Near to the person of the man who covets
The treasure I have won; and does not parley,
As I am well advised, with scruples,—there, too,
Where jealousy would search the last to find me!
Oh Power that lovest faith and innocence,
For their sweet sakes, be now propitious to me!

Enter ALMAGRO and PEDRO.

ALMAGRO.

Is this the man?—his air is very stately!

PEDRO.

It is the carriage of his blood, my lord ;
Ne'er back'd by its partaker. You require
A man whom it beseems you have beside you,
Appendage of your court, that will not shame you.
Behold such. A stern man, as prompt as passive,
Whate'er your bidding—such a one attends you—
A stranger, too, to all who are about you !
No race like his to suit you, and of that race
No sample fit as he is.

ALMAGRO.

It is well !
That reverend man you spoke of—have you seen him ?

PEDRO.

I have.

ALMAGRO.

What says he ?

PEDRO.

He will be your hand.
Not more will question—less will do—your bidding.

ALMAGRO.

Warn him to come to me ere nine this evening,
Ere the third quarter turns.—Friend, do you heed
A woman's tears ? [To ALONZO.

ALONZO.

They do not pierce the ear.
Her shrieks do, and as little they would move me.

ALMAGRO.

What would you stop at, to obey the will
Of him you served ?

ALONZO.

At nothing till 'twas done !

ALMAGRO.

Not blood ?

ALONZO.

No more, sir, than the blade which sheds it.

ALMAGRO.

Wait by my side.—Advancement ne'er is bought,
But at some cost of friends. I know not, now,
Who loves me. Pry about you.—As we go
I'll tell you where my heart and soul do hang
Their all of being on !

ALONZO.

An enemy,
Whom you would overcome? He is at your feet !

ALMAGRO.

An enemy whom giv'st thou to mine arms,
I'll fall at yours, as my good angel ever !

ALONZO.

A woman !—Can't you strain her to your mood
Without my help ?—You Christians there are wrong,
What we as minions treat, to rate as idols !
You flatter—sue—implore !—Possession speaks
Our wishes !

ALMAGRO.

Well you please me, thus to talk.
Thanks, Pedro !—Come !—keep near me ! Well you please
me. *[They go out.]*

SCENE II.

A Chamber in the Citadel.

Enter ALASCO and OLIVIA.

ALASCO.

Olivia !

OLIVIA.

Well, my brother ?

ALASCO.

It is long

Since you and I have talk'd.

OLIVIA.

There was a time

We had not been so long apart, Alasco,

At liberty to meet !

ALASCO.

There was a time

We had one heart !—That time is past !

OLIVIA.

How long ?

ALASCO.

E'er since the hour you spurn'd your brother's friend,

His soul's election, from among the prime

Acknowledged of his race, and gave your heart

To throne a stranger.

OLIVIA.

He deserved it, brother !

ALASCO.

No, not thy heart !—The throne that he was born to,

I grant him worthy of, but not thy heart !
There is but one such throne ; as for the other,
There are a hundred such—ay, maybe, better !
How much, Olivia, did it weigh with you
That he, you chose, was heir unto a throne ?

OLIVIA.

Brother ! — (*Much hurt.*)

ALASCO.

I know ! forgive me ! Not a doit !
O ! my Olivia ! lives the man durst slight thee,
And do I so ? That inadvertent wrong
Hath, more than argument, set all to rights !
Being here to blame, I have been all to blame !
Forgive me ! Love me ! Take me to your heart
Again, as I do thee to mine, my sister !

OLIVIA.

How like a new gift is old love restor'd !
How seems it richer, though the very same !
How the soul opens to receive it, wider
Than e'er it did before !—Alasco ! now
I'll show thee, brother, I have all along
Deserved thy love, deserving it e'en there
Where thou account'st me wanting !

ALASCO.

Not a word
Of that again ! you prized the Prince's worth,
Before you knew his title ; which he doff'd,
Lest, seeking love, he might ambition meet,
And take it for its betters ! You were wed
Before you knew you were a prince's wife !
Have you forgiven me ?

OLIVIA.

Have I not, my brother ?
But, for mine own content, Alasco, hear me,
While for thy sister's coldness to thy friend
I give thee now her reason.

ALASCO.

Give it me,
But for thine own content ; not mine, Olivia :—
Go on ! Why do you hesitate ? The thing
You wish'd to tell me, and I would not hear,
And then wish'd more to tell me, now I would hear it,
Why do you hesitate to tell ?

OLIVIA.

Alasco,
You are so rash when you are angry.

ALASCO (*roused*).

Ay—
Is there chance of that ?

OLIVIA.

No, no !

ALASCO (*most impatiently*)

There is !

OLIVIA.

You see !
Wisely I kept it from thee at the time ;
Else bloodshed had ensued !

ALASCO (*with extreme impatience*).

Bloodshed ! for what ?

OLIVIA.

Outrage long past !

ALASCO (*furiously*).

Outrage!—(*recollects himself*.) Long past is it?
Then tell it me, no fear I shall be rash!
No, nor yet angry! I shall look upon it
As a thing that's dead, and no more wage war with it
Than I would with a corse! Almagro offer'd thee
No outrage? (*furiously*).

OLIVIA.

There again!

ALASCO (*recovering himself*).

And if he did—

'Tis past and gone, so dead.—Go on, Olivia,
Go on, my sister!

OLIVIA.

You remember, don't you,
From long protracted absence, coming home,
And finding me, whom you had left a girl,
Stolen into womanhood? Stolen, I may say,
For at that stage I had, indeed, arriv'd
Without my father's note, or e'en my own;
So change, by progress still before our eyes,
Is oft-times past, before we dream 'tis near.

ALASCO.

That time, Olivia, I remember well!
Then first I felt I was a brother, when
The girl, I left, I found not; but, instead,
A woman newly ripen'd! You had on
The gear of other times! 'Twas quite outgrown,
And scantiest there where nature's bounty most
Upbraided lack of fulness! Oh, what thoughts
Of risks and wrongs, by woman run and borne,
Shot through my brain, succeeding one another

As lightning flashes, when the welkin round
Is thick with thunder-storms !—awakening in me
Tinglings of feelings never touch'd before,
And summoning, almost in palpable,
Distinct embodiment, the household virtues
To pass in solemn, stern array before me—
Among them honour chief, and chastity !
I sprang to thee, and o'er thy shoulders threw
Thy kerchief, snatch'd from thy surprised hand !
The change pass'd o'er thee then, from frankest joy
To see me back, to strangest wonderment !
The change, from that, to most alarm'd confusion,
As, in a moment, burst on thee the thought
What time had done, thou ne'er hadst ta'en account of,
Till then reveal'd by that thy brother's act !
The statue that thou stood'st, except the blush
Which, prompted by that act, thy heart call'd up
As 'twere to veil thy cheek, and answer for
Thy earth-fix'd eye, that life had cast it there !
I shall be old when I forget the hour
I threw that kerchief o'er thee !

OLIVIA (*hesitating*).

Brother !—

ALASCO.

Well ?

OLIVIA (*hesitating*).

One day—

ALASCO.

Go on ! what happen'd thee that day ?

OLIVIA (*still hesitating*).

That kerchief—

ALASCO.

Well?

OLIVIA.

I cannot tell it thee!

I durst not even breathe it to my father!—(*Overpowered
with confusion, and throwing herself on ALASCO's neck*).

ALASCO.

You need not! Some one pluck'd it off!—Who was it?
Who was it?—fool!—who was it but Almagro!
The flood of light a little chink lets in!
How blind a man may be, yet think he sees!
How fast asleep, yet fancy he's awake!
How may he be cajoled—robb'd—cozen'd—gull'd—
Where for fair dealing he would stake his life,
As free as risk a counter on a card
With all the odds to back him!—It is clear!
Almagro's heart is rotten!—What have I done?

OLIVIA.

What have you done, my brother?

ALASCO. †

What have I done?

You know, and ask!—why, made Almagro Regent!
Almagro Regent, in my sister's place!
Given him command over myself, and worse,
O'er thee, to whom he did that violence
Turns all my blood to fire! how may'st thou fare.

OLIVIA.

Remember you your comment, once you read
The story of Lucrece to me? You said
She used too late her dagger—that she chose
Most ill, the stain itself contracting, rather
Than bear the slanderous imputation,

Howe'er so base begotten; that her error
The custom of her time could not atone for;
That she was more to pride a martyr, than
To chastity! unworthy setting up
A sample of a woman fit to copy!

ALASCO.

Those very words thy brother's heart spoke to thee!

OLIVIA.

Those very words thy sister's heart set down
Never to be obliterated!—See! [*Drawing forth a dagger.*]

ALASCO.

Thou shalt not come to such extremity!
Oh, let me think a while, my sister—go—
This is no home for thee!—Go!—Hold thee, sister,
In readiness to bear me company;
But let me with myself a while commune,
There's something here wants calming—such a sea
Cannot at once go down, and give us leave
To put the vessel on her course again!

OLIVIA.

Bless thee, Alasco!

[*Going.*]

ALASCO.

Sister, stay!—The King!—
His life's in jeopardy!

OLIVIA.

The King is safe!
I fear'd thee, brother,—durst not breathe it to thee!—
But he escaped last night by my contrivance!

ALASCO.

O woman! clear in apprehension—prompt

In action, when her sympathies arouse her !
A mountain hast thou heaved from off my soul,
And for reproaches, take my blessings with thee !
Now leave me for a while !

OLIVIA.

My heart sinks in me
At thought of losing sight of thee, my brother !

[Goes out.]

ALASCO.

How many things come back upon me, now,
That pass'd me by before unheeded by me,
To prove Almagro wanting !—There is Gomez !—
Gomez, he told me was a wretch !—had fail'd him
When trusted by him !—Now he hugs him !—Ay,
Gomez is now of service ! There's Velasquez,
A man far likelier to overlook,
Than note a fault.—Almagro must have play'd
The viper to him, and Velasquez shuns him
Lest he be stung again !—There's Henriquez,
Blotches from head to foot, believe Almagro,
And he was hand in glove with him before,
For all his leprosy, when Henriquez
Was factor to his fortunes.—Heaven and earth !
Now I bethink me, where are Pedro, Carlos,
And twenty others, once his good companions ?
True men and kindly !—Where are they ? gone from him !
He comes !—untimely !—would I could avoid him.

Enter ALMAGRO and THERESA.

ALMAGRO.

You know your duty—see that you perform it—
Let the reward that I have promised you

Remind you of obedience. Suffer her not
Out of your sight—nor be thrust off—nor humour'd;
Your answer—forced to it—"The Regent wills it,"
Not in a hurry though!

THERESA.

I shall observe.

[*Goes out.*]

ALMAGRO.

Now am I jocund as the mariner
Whose progress e'en before his reckoning runs,
And, ere expected, shows his port to him—
Whose vessel seems beloved of the winds,
Which follow her where'er she turns her prow.
I am Regent!—That is power achiev'd—Alasco,
Speeds to the army, and Velasquez, with him.
That is immunity to use my power!
Olivia stays in Sarragossa—that
Is love achieved.—O! Opportunity!
Thou favourer of wishes, com'st thou to me,
And shall I let thee go again, and say
Thou left'st me mine unblest?—No!—though I craved
The help of fraud or force to effect fruition.
Fair measures first I'll try—they bring our ends
Most happily about. So be't. Let's see—
A quarrel is to be made up—a fault
Acknowledged and atoned for—so, from foes,
We turn to friends.—'That's easy—but to turn
From friends to lovers—there's the feat that taxes
Both wit and labour!—There's Ruphino, though—
He hates me! Well!—the good of the republic
May crave his absence hence—some honourable

Employment—like Velasquez, and his sons,
We'll find him such.—So now, to see Olivia;
Admit my error, own it past forgiveness—
The very surest way to make it venial—
Dilate on my contrition—sigh for friendship,
Without a hope of it—a warranty
Especial and infallible that she
Will find me hope enough—and here succeeding,
To fair or foul means trust the rest!—

[*Going towards Olivia's apartment, meets ALASCO.*]

Alasco!—

Here yet?—I swear thou art still a child, as much
As in thy play-time years!

ALASCO.

Almagro!—

ALMAGRO.

Peace!

Thou mak'st me mad!—what are the thews of manhood
Without the thoughts and deeds?—In patience' name,
If thou would'st bide with men, and rank with them,
Be one of them and act like them!—Balance here,
Lounging upon the heel that should be smoking
With rowels red with speed, at least ten leagues
By this from Sarragossa!

ALASCO.

But, Almagro—

ALMAGRO.

Nay, talk to children, not to me!—By our Lady,
Thou art not a man!—A feebleness, Alasco,
There is about you, hateful to my nature!
An easiness that treats, as lightest things,

Matters of grave account.—Gods!—we have plac'd
Our hopes and fears, our liberties and lives,
In a man's hands, as we believ'd; and lo!
He turns out to be a boy!

ALASCO.

By your favour—

ALMAGRO.

'Sdeath!

'Tis injury to me!—foul injury!—

Return'd for all the good I have done for you!

How will men talk?—what will my credit come to,

For judgment or for justice? Fifty others

Had leap'd at such a post, not one of whom

Had so approved himself unworthy of it,

As thou hast done! How shall I make defence

When they allege to me, they know your charger

Did cool his mettle at the gate, the while

You play'd the page, in your sister's antichamber!

ALASCO.

Where thou play'dst, visiter!—What brought thee hither?

Almagro!—mark!—a brother speaks to you,

And tells you that the floor you stand upon

Henceforth to you is interdicted ground!

Mark!—interdicted by a brother's honour!

Who holds the trespasser 'gainst his commands

Responsible with his blood!

ALMAGRO.

To me, Alasco!—

Do you say this to me?—to me—your friend?

ALASCO.

Is it so, Almagro?—Art thou Alasco's friend?

ALMAGRO.

Can I be otherwise?

ALASCO.

Almagro, tell me,
Are you a man of whom his friend can say
He knows his heart, whene'er he hears his tongue;
Or one whose tongue alleges of his heart
Things that abide not there?

ALMAGRO.

What do you mean?

ALASCO.

What I say!—Almagro, are you my friend indeed?
Where's the reply ere well the question's done,
That, from lov'd lips, can't brook the loving wrong,
But, from one word divining all the rest,
The mouth of the propounder stops with flouts,
Which, while they chafe, assure him. Art thou my friend?
You are sullen!—Ill at ease, I will not say—
Why did you start when I said—"Ill at ease?"
You are not my friend!—when you declared you were so,
You spoke what was not true!

ALMAGRO.

Sir!

ALASCO.

Saint Iago!

'Tis come to "Sir!" The truth is out at last, then!
'Tis come to "Sir!" 'twixt you and me! There's chance
then

That it may come to blows!—Is there, Almagro?

"Sir"—'tis as clear as day!—It could not be!

The thing's impossible.

ALMAGRO.

What is impossible?

ALASCO.

That a strong stream should stop with frost, nor give
The eye of the observer time to wink,
Ere what was flood is ice.—I have been basking
In summer, dreaming on a bank of snow,
And freezing now awake! “Sir”——

ALMAGRO.

You forget
I am Regent!

ALASCO.

You are Regent?—Oh, you are Regent!
True!—true!—you are another kind of man!—
Of all anomalies, the most outrageous
Is this—that circumstances should make the man
More than the man himself—just as if men
Were no whit better than the meats they feed on,
Whose value varies by the mode of dressing;
That what, to-day, will bring one pistole only,
By change of cookery brings five to-morrow!
You are Regent? 'tis too bad!—the brute, in this,
Fares far more rationally than his master,
For he is rated by his own properties,
And gives rank to kennel—takes none from it!
Who made you Regent?

ALMAGRO.

Who?—the people!

ALASCO.

I!

ALMAGRO.

'Tis false!

ALASCO.

Ha! say you so?—Come on then! you're

A traitor !

ALMAGRO.

What ?

ALASCO.

You heard !—is it possible ?

Then was it true what some one told me once,
That when he threaten'd thee with chastisement,
Whereof he gave thee earnest with his tongue,
In terms the bearer better were struck dead,
Than unrevenged survive them, thou didst stand
E'en thus.

ALMAGRO.

How ?

ALASCO.

Why the 'haviour of a sheet !

Anger, I know, turns pale as well as red ;
But if it lacks the hue, it has the blow !—

My sister, recreant !—I will not draw
On one that dares not draw on me again,
Nor even wag my tongue at such a man !

“ Man !” do I say ?—Well, “ man.”—I scorn to rail !

[RUPHINO enters in the background, and stopping short,
half retires again.

ALMAGRO.

Alasco ! you have spurn'd me !—shamefully
Aspers'd my manhood !—and I bear it all,
For I am not a friend plays fast and loose !
Nay, wrong me more !—I will the more forbear !
Thou doubt'st it ?—but a proof can face a doubt,
And I have one at hand, will make thee writhe,
That ever thou misus'dst me. Wait a little,

I'll give thee time to cool,—Provide my proof;
And then return, and we are friends again! [Goes out.]

RUPHINO.

Alasco! [Hastily advancing.]

ALASCO.

Father!

RUPHINO.

Hast thou been, Alasco,
A son to me?

ALASCO.

In love,—but not in duty!

RUPHINO.

In duty too, dost thou my bidding now!
Wilt do it?

ALASCO.

Yes!

RUPHINO.

Wilt swear to do it?

ALASCO.

Yes;

I swear!

RUPHINO.

He hears thee who remembers, boy!
Forthwith depart for thy command.—Velasquez
Waits with thy courser at the postern.—Fly!
Thou'lt find within his breast another heart
True to thee as thine own!—Confide in him!—

ALASCO.

Almagro!—

RUPHINO.

Peace!—Almagro means thee evil!
Thy sister's honour is in jeopardy—
I know what thou would'st say.—It is too late!

She could not fly with thee, were she prepared,
Or were there means at hand, or were there time
To furnish them. She is betray'd!—beset!—
The safety which she cannot fly to,—thou
Must bring to her, my son, and speedily—
It must come speedily, if it come at all!

ALASCO.

Why, father!—

RUPHINO.

Heav'n!—in my extremity
Cannot I find a friend in my own son!
Thy sister, by Almagro's treason warn'd,
Has set the king at liberty, and word
Was by his secret escort brought that he
Had to the patriot force commission sent
With terms of such redress, as their demands,
O'erbearing as they were, durst ne'er lift eye to!
I should not wonder, met you now advancing,
And hand in hand, those who the other day
Bore weapons against weapons! There is rescue!
Safety! for me, thy sister!—all of us!
Away—away,—not by the common stair—
Almagro now ascends it, with his guards!
They come for thee—believe me for this once!
This passage to thy sister, by her lord
Reveal'd, by her to me,—and which were now
Portal to liberty, were she not watch'd
By spies, who dog her every footfall—safe
Without the postern will conduct thee.—Fly—
No word!—Thy oath!—Thy sister's honour!—Fly!

[ALASCO goes out.]

Enter ALMAGRO with Guards, and attended by NUNEZ and OMER.

ALMAGRO (*speaking as he enters*).

Secure the traitor!—only now his sword
Was pointed 'gainst your Regent's heart.

NUNEZ.

My lord,
Alasco is not here!—this is his father.

ALMAGRO.

Not here!—I left him here!—where is the traitor?

RUPHINO.

Inquire, Almagro, of thyself for him!

ALMAGRO.

Where is thy son?

RUPHINO.

Safe, monster, from thy fangs!

ALMAGRO.

What! fled!—Go seek him in the room beyond.
Some nook will give him to you,—he could not fly!
Myself stood sentry on the stair.

[All go out but ALMAGRO and RUPHINO.]

RUPHINO.

You did?
You needs must love the friend you watch so well!

ALMAGRO.

You mock at things make other men look grave.

RUPHINO.

What things?

ALMAGRO.

Bonds!—maybe death!

RUPHINO.

O Heav'n ! this man
To talk of bonds and death to me that was
More than his equal yesterday !—'Tis thus
Fair enterprise falls into disrepute,
And the just fight is lost !—Some hollow heart
Makes common cause with the abettors ; toils,
Suffers perhaps ; draws on himself all eyes,
All trust, until their cause and he be one ;
When gets he all he asks for,—sought for,—power !
The which awhile he wields to profit them ;
But, now secure of, casts the mask aside,
Employs for his own ends, without consent
Of man or angel, until those that groan'd
At evil days gone by, now shake the head
And wish them back again !

ALMAGRO.

Thy life's near spent ;
Husband the little that remains of it.

RUPHINO.

He husbands life who looks not to its length
But use, and uses it to glorify
The giver !

ALMAGRO.

Dotard !—Hither comes your son !

RUPHINO.

Turn not your face aside, nor move away,
You need not shrink from him, he does not come !

[*Re-enter NUNEZ and the others.*]

ALMAGRO.

Is he not found ?

NUNEZ.

No !

ALMAGRO.

No ? He must be here !

He pass'd not forth !— I swear he pass'd not forth.

Where is your son, old man ?—What smile you at ?

RUPHINO.

At your simplicity, Almagro.

ALMAGRO.

Ay !

RUPHINO.

Ay, sir, to ask a father for his son,

That you may give him up to butchery !

He is safe, sir, safe !—His father's life upon it !

ALMAGRO.

Maybe !—maybe !—He must be found !

Enter CORTEZ (hastily).

CORTEZ.

The Regent ?

ALMAGRO.

Here, sir !

CORTEZ.

Obedient to your highness' will,
I sought the King, in straiter custody
To place him.

ALMAGRO.

Well, sir !—And you found him ?

CORTEZ.

No.

ALMAGRO.

Treason on every side !—Produce your son !

RUPHINO.

I cannot !

ALMAGRO.

Tell us where you have bestow'd him.

RUPHINO.

I will not !

ALMAGRO.

Take him to the rack !

RUPHINO.

The rack !—

What !—an old man like me ?—Well, then, the rack !

Thou mock'st its strength, to waste it on a straw !

NUNEZ.

My lord, forbear !

ALMAGRO.

What !—Nunez ?

NUNEZ.

To this pass

Let it not come.

CORTEZ.

Give ear, my lord, to Nunez !

ALMAGRO.

Talk to a whirlwind !—Am I Regent, Cortez ;

Or you, or Nunez ?

NUNEZ.

Hand will I have none

In such a deed.

CORTEZ.

Nor I.

ALMAGRO.

You will not ?—Ay !—

Omer,—See it done !—You may withdraw, my friends.

[NUNEZ and CORTEZ retire.]

Away with him !

RUPHINO.

When the command shall come
That summons thee away, thou'lt shrink from it,
As never shall my body from the rack !

[RUPHINO is taken out by OMER and Guards.]

ALMAGRO.

Hence !—Now have I a thought what Chaos was,
Before the world sprung out of it !—Immense
Perplexity of things !—Nothing, itself !
Naught individuality, but merging
Into some other thing. Ambition, Love,
Hatred, Revenge, Determination, Fear,
All holding sway together, but with strife
That makes a mock of rule ! I cannot see
The light for darkness ; darkness fails with light !
I cannot stop,—nor yet, for stops, go on !—
I am not anywhere,—yet everywhere !
Somewhere to fix !—some shape to give resolve !
It takes a form, and straightway vanishes
Into some other—then another yet,
Until confusion reels !

Enter PEDRO.

PEDRO.

My lord !

ALMAGRO.

Well, Pedro ?

Has the old man confess'd ?

PEDRO.

No.

ALMAGRO.

No !—Enough ;

Remove him from the rack !

PEDRO.

That duty, death
Has spared us.

ALMAGRO.

Dead?

PEDRO.

He is dead!

ALMAGRO.

I feel his frost!

He freezes more than I, but feels it not!

As with the thunder comes the clearing up,

So ends this shock my chaos, and my thoughts

Begin to settle—into ruin!—Ruin?—

Come ruin, then, but not to me alone!

[Goes out.

END OF ACT FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Ante-room to Olivia's Chamber.

Two Attendants variously occupied—a knock at the door—which one of them opens.

Enter ALMAGRO, ANTHONIO, and OMER.

ALMAGRO.

You are dismiss'd till morning.—You will find
Your couches in the quarter that we spoke of.—
Withdraw; and mind, thanks but precede rewards,
Not stand for them with us! meantime we thank you.
Good night.—

[Attendants go out, ALMAGRO locks the door after them.]

Anthonio!

[ANTHONIO comes forward.]

Are you a man of nerve?

ANTHONIO.

I dare aver I am.

ALMAGRO.

'Tis a great property,
Which more avails men in this world of barter
Than what they buy or sell;—you know what I mean?
The nerve that gains its point, no matter how!
You will perform the ceremony?

ANTHONIO.

Yes.

ALMAGRO.

Howe'er she may protest, gainsay, entreat,
Threaten, change colour, weep, shriek, swoon away—
It may come to that—in any case whatever,
You will not halt, but on?

ANTHONIO.

I shall go on!

ALMAGRO.

And I shall render the responses, both
For her, and for myself. Retire and wait
In the Oratory—that's the door to it.—

[ANTHONIO goes out.

Omer!

OMER.

My lord!

ALMAGRO.

'Tis likely, as I told you,
Your aid may stead me; in which case approve
The Moor, may boast in you, a worthy son.
You will see her tears, as though you saw them not!
And hear her cries, as though you heard them not!
And limbs, whose tenderness dissuade enforcement,
Reply to as the vice would, say it held them!
Behind these hangings take thy station, till
My summons asks thy aid—till then keep still!

OMER.

I shall observe, my lord.

[OMER conceals himself.

ALMAGRO.

And I reward!

'Tis near the time she makes her toilette up
For the night.—Anon she'll summon her attendants,

And missing their reply, no doubt come forth.

Hark ! her remembrancer !—listen !

[*The clock strikes.*]

OLIVIA (*within*).

Therese !

ALMAGRO.

Well answer'd, silence !

OLIVIA.

What !—Therese !—Therese !

Christina ! where are you ?

[*Enters without perceiving ALMAGRO, who retires a little.*]

Where are my maids ?

I am left alone by them—and purposely !

I am sure of it !—Alasco does not come,

Nor message has he sent me !—Flight he talk'd of,

And still am I in Sarragossa ! O !

What mountain huge and inaccessible

Has fate heav'd up between us ?—Has he seen

Almagro ? tax'd him with the shame he did me ?

And, for his honest rashness, answer'd with

His liberty—perhaps his life ? That man

Is match for all extremities !—That man,

I have heard my father say, to gain his end,

Would stop at nought—not blood !—My father, too !

'Tis past the time he used to visit me,

An hour ; nor has he come,—no word from him !

My motions watch'd,—egress debarr'd me from

The quarters set apart for me !—the cause,

“Reasons of state”—“the Regent's will ;” but why

His will, or what those reasons, held from me—

The door ! perhaps 'tis free. Lock'd on me still !

[*Tries to open it.*]

Heaven is not lock'd !—there is my only refuge !
I'll in, nor other couch enjoy to-night
Save what my knees can make them of the ground,
Whence shall my soul look up to heaven till morning !

[Retiring, is intercepted by ALMAGRO.]

Almagro !

ALMAGRO.

Not so fast, Olivia—stop ;
Or, if you will return into your chamber,
I'll pass along with you.

OLIVIA.

Ho !—help there !

ALMAGRO (*grasping her wrist*).

Silence !

Shriek not !

OLIVIA.

My wrist is broken, sir.

ALMAGRO.

I grasp'd it,
But not with undue force.

OLIVIA.

Look there !—the blood
In answer to your fingers !—Fie !—a man
And use a woman so ! Where are my women !—
Wherefore attend they not ?—why not obey
My summons ?—where are they ?

ALMAGRO.

Hence, by my orders ;
Far out of reach of hearing—as all others
Who might intrude upon the conference
I mean to hold with you !—You will call in vain.

H

OLIVIA.

Confer with thee?—here?—at this time o' night,
Alone?—a man?—and one I shudder at?
In company, and in the open day!
Confer!—Begone, sir!—If respect, on thy part,
Does not instruct thee to recross my threshold,
Let loathing upon mine! Think what I am, sir,
And if thou hast forgot thou art a man,
Let that remind thee on't, and make thee blush,
And drive thee from my presence!

ALMAGRO.

What art thou?

OLIVIA.

What am I, sir?—a wife!—I am a wife!—
A name that's haply borne by one that's weak,
But gives a power to her, to cope with which,
He that would mock her must make up his mind
To abide the wrath of the stern sanctities
Which in the names of father, brother, husband,
Protect the wearer's honour!

ALMAGRO.

With your leave,
At least a word or two before we part.

OLIVIA.

No! not a syllable!

ALMAGRO.

Without your leave, then!

OLIVIA.

Dare you compel me?

ALMAGRO.

If you force me.—Girl,
You are in my power!

OLIVIA.

Heavens ! and for this same man

My brother would have laid his life down ! (*to herself*)

Where

Is my brother ?—At the thought of strait to him,

Danger or worse, how, all at once, my heart

Casts off the shackles of congealing fear,

And feels at large, with all its faculties !

[*Resolutely approaches ALMAGRO, without looking at him, through abhorrence.*]

Almagro, where is my brother ?

ALMAGRO (*confounded momentarily*).

Where !—

OLIVIA.

Take time !

The answer's not at hand—not to be found

Except by dint of searching for 't—take time !

Yet why delay at all ?—Truth has no answer

Save one—if that won't serve, there's falsehood with

A thousand.—Take the first of them—from first

To last, they are all the same !—Is he alive ?

ALMAGRO.

He is !

OLIVIA.

Where is he ?

ALMAGRO.

Gone to his command,

As I suppose.

OLIVIA.

As you suppose ! You met,

Before he went ?

ALMAGRO.

I think we did.

OLIVIA.

You think !

You had no words ?

ALMAGRO.

Words !

OLIVIA.

Words ! You did not quarrel ?

ALMAGRO.

Quarrel !

OLIVIA.

No mortal strife fell out between you ?

No swords were drawn, nor daggers yet pluck'd forth,

Were there ?

ALMAGRO.

My hand fall from my side, if sword

Or dagger quitted sheath of mine to-day !

OLIVIA (*aside*).

No thunder yet, and thunder clouds all round !

Out of such pitch and wrack a bolt must come !—

My father ! how is it with him ? Almagro,

How fares it with my father ? where is he ?

Or access hither is prevented him,

Or hence he bears my brother company,

Or something or another has befallen him.

Why don't you speak, Almagro ? (*looking at him.*) Gracious powers !

Your face, which scarce till now I have lifted eye to,

Is not the same ! but changed, and horribly !

How you remind me of a wretch I saw

Taken in the act of murder once ! He had pass'd me

An hour before, a hale young man. The change

An hour had made in him ! He had aged a life,
E'en in that hour—and so have you since last
I look'd upon you, near as brief a lapse !
Almagro, where is my father ? tell me, man !
What takes away your breath, or strikes you dumb ?
I am not your accusing spirit—I am only
My father's child ! Are you his murderer ?—
He is murder'd !

ALMAGRO (*by an effort recovering himself*).

Well may wonder gasp to meet,
From lips so loved, question of act so hateful !
Listen and interrupt me not.—Thy vows
Thy father-King has all absolved thee from ;
Thou art free to wed again, and wed to me
This very hour shall see thee !

OLIVIA.

Wed to thee !

ALMAGRO.

You heard me, did you not ?

OLIVIA.

Hast thou encounter'd
The horror of the wolf pack, as, at night,
The howl at distance on the mountain road
Admonish'd thee, when hunger was abroad
Roaming ravine and steep, cut off from food,
As the earth lay entomb'd in frozen snow ?
I have, until my blood almost congeal'd,
My joints began to lose their faculty,
And, but for help, I must have dropped and lain,
Incapable of motion as a stone !
'Twas nothing to the thought of wedding thee !—

Though that I know a thing impossible!—
Not with the wolf pack so! knew I the track
The famish'd monsters would be sure to come;
Sooner would I lie in it, bound hand and foot,
Than risk the chance would make me bride to thee!
Thy hand, presenting me the bridal ring,
I would recoil from as it brought to me
My brother's corse! Yea, as 'twere reeking with
My father's blood!—Preserve me Heaven! he looks
Again the very heart and soul of murder!

ALMAGRO (*recovering himself*).

I will speak to thee once more, and then I'll act.
Observe, within this quarter where thou bidest
There breathe not any can be hindrance to me!
The forms and agents that make man and wife
Are ready!—Sure as in that chamber lies
Thy couch, and his thou call'dst aforetime lord—
That couch receives another lord to-night!
Consent!

OLIVIA.

I think—and madden while I think!
O husband, where art thou?—Alasco!—Father!
A wife!—a child!—a sister!—and no help!

ALMAGRO.

Consent!—provoke not force!

OLIVIA.

I dare you, wretch!
Ay, woman as I am—weak and alone—
I execrate, abhor you, and defy you!

ALMAGRO.

What, ho!—within there! [OMER and ANTHONIO advance.]

OLIVIA (*draws a dagger*).

Is it so? behold, then!

This talisman will I defeat thee with,
Summoning him, with whom, to side with me,
I am more than match for all who come against me!
Witness, just Heaven! the act that wrecks my life,
To save my honour, is not mine but his
Who on this dread extremity impels me!—
Mine honour precious for itself, past life,
But doubly precious for my dear lord's sake;
In faith to whom my heart pours out the blood,
No drop of which was e'er rebellious to him.

[OMER arrests her arm as she is going to stab herself; she struggles desperately with him—he breathes her name in her ear—she becomes suddenly motionless—gazes at him intently—shrieks, and falls fainting into his arms.

ALMAGRO.

Prevent her—Oh, well done!—What, is she dead?

[*Trumpet at a great distance.*

OMER.

She has fainted.

ALMAGRO.

Hark!—what hear you?

OMER.

I mistake,
Or 'tis a trumpet.

ALMAGRO.

From without the walls?

OMER.

I thought so.

ALMAGRO.

There it is again—it speaks——

OMER.

Like a friend.

ALMAGRO.

It does so.

CORTEZ (*without*).

Where is the Regent?

ALMAGRO (*unlocking the door*).

Here !

Enter CORTEZ.

CORTEZ.

Alasco and the King, their powers combined,
Approach the gates,—a herald in their names
Demands admittance, which the crowd, not only,
But e'en the soldiery, to yield incline.
Ruphino's death is bruited far and wide,
And discontent thereon is open-mouth'd.
Still of your special friends, the most stand true,
The which to keep behoves you show yourself.

ALMAGRO.

I come to them, away !—I follow you. [CORTEZ *goes out*.
Observe my signet—should I send it to you, (*to* OMER)
The purpose now you balk'd yourself effect.
'Tis but her own intent that you fulfil,
So may the act light on your conscience sit.
That done, you know where lie my coffers—Take
The key and help yourself !—Attend me, father !

[*Goes out with* ANTHONIO.

OMER.

O moment, look'd for in despite of hope,

And art thou come,—and fraught so rich with blessing !
Olivia !—Laps'd as are her senses, still
Perception answers me.—A smile, I am sure,
Began to waken on her lips, though straight
It dropp'd asleep again !—and if there did,
Again I can awaken it.—Olivia !
There 'tis ! not brighter to the mariner
Benighted and storm-torn, his reckoning lost,
Strikes on a beacon the clear rising sun,
Than beams that smile upon her faithful lip !
Her heart resumes its functions,—There it beats !
And o'er her cheek—as wan as death's before,
Life 'gins to shoot, though palely.—Such a welkin
'Gan never yet the dawn to crimson up ;
Whose fragrance is a beggar to the balm
That breathes upon me now !—Her eyelids quiver !
They open, if I breathe her name again !
How near may joy, life's feast, become its bane,
Lack to abundance on a sudden turning !
If I so gasp, how may it prove with her ?
She knew me !—clear she did !

OLIVIA (*coming gradually to herself*).

Alonzo ! Sure—

I saw Alonzo !—Through no other's eyes
Alonzo's soul could look !—I heard him speak too !
It must be so, or wherefore is his voice
Fresh in mine ear ?—who holds me ?—Is't Alonzo ?—

[ALONZO *turns away from her*.

Show me thy face !—The mockery of die
And gear !—to change the dress and the complexion,
While the soul sits in her assured seat,—

The eye, which scoffs at hues and garniture
That would supplant its own! Though thou didst take
The Ethiop's 'haviour and habiliments,
I would know thee!—call thee my Alonzo!—throw
My trustful arms around thee!

ALONZO.

My Olivia!

OLIVIA.

Ah, my dear lord!—

[*Raising her head from his neck and gazing upon him, then
sinking on his neck again. Shouts without.*]

What means that tumult?

ALONZO.

Safety.

Re-enter the Priest.

PRIEST.

This signet from the Regent.

ALONZO.

What has happen'd?

PRIEST.

Almagro, striving to retain the city,
Was by his own abettors overborne.
The gates have welcomed in their former master,
With whom Alasco enters now; which issue
As soon as he foresaw, Almagro gave
This signet to me, with injunction strict
To place it in thy hand.

ALONZO.

'Tis well!—retire.

[*Priest goes out.*]

OLIVIA.

Why sends Almagro, love, to thee his signet?

ALONZO.

For thy destruction.

OLIVIA.

Fit that he, who slew
The father, should destroy the child—for well
I know he slew him.

ALONZO.

Even there is hope!
Oh Heaven! thou turn'st again the hue of death—
Bear up!—be strong in trust.—Why am I here
If not advisedly—why seem I what
You see, but for an end?—Oh, tune thy soul
To thoughts of comfort, even there, where hope
Seems dead!—Forbear to question! Come with me,
And list what I shall tell thee as we go! [They go out.

SCENE II.

The Corridor of the Palace.

Enter VELASQUEZ and ANDREAS, meeting NUNEZ.

VELASQUEZ.

Saw you Alasco, as you came along?

NUNEZ.

No, sir.

VELASQUEZ.

The same response I meet from all:
Strange, how I lost him all at once!—we enter'd
The citadel together! where can he be?
Only a word or two I changed with one,
Apart, who drew me to confer with him,

And straight returning, found Alasco, vanish'd.

NUNEZ.

Remember'st who was with him ?

VELASQUEZ.

Cortez.

NUNEZ.

Right !

Myself remark'd them—overheard them speaking,
Touching the manner of Ruphino's murder,
The while Almagro, guarded, walk'd before.

VELASQUEZ.

Almagro ? you remind me now of him.
Him, also, did I miss.

NUNEZ.

At the same time ?
Where'er they are, most like they are together.

VELASQUEZ.

The chance o'erleaps your guess—Be sure they are !
At such a juncture, but his father's death,
And he the hated instrument of it,
Could so engross Alasco that he leaves
The throne untended that gives amnesty
To wide revolt ; and, for the grace it deigns,
Receives whole hearts with thrice sworn homage back !
Let 's search for good Alasco.—Near Almagro,
Guarded and chain'd, I fear for him ; no match,
Gainst such a maze of wily villany !
Speed, sirs—bestir yourselves—he must be found !
[They go out.]

SCENE III.

The Dungeon of Torture.

Around, the various implements. In the front, on one side, the rack ; on the other, the block.

Enter ALASCO,—stops and looks after him.

ALASCO.

Why do you hesitate? Come in, Almagro !
Come in.

Enter ALMAGRO, followed by Jailer and Guards.

ALMAGRO.

A strange place this for conference !

ALASCO.

It is a silent and retired place :
What fitter then? Here are no eaves-droppers !
No thin partitions which invite the ear
While they repel the eye !—Free speech may here
Make free !—Your sword, good jailer, leave with me,
And lay it noiselessly on yonder bench ;
Then, with your friends, retire ; and as you go,
Make fast the door. An hour hence, come again !—
By then, we shall have done. There for your pains.

[Aside to Jailer.

[Gives a purse to the Jailer, who retires with Guards, locking the door after them, having previously laid his sword as directed.

ALMAGRO.

Why does he lock the dungeon door ?

ALASCO.

To keep
Intrusion out. Such friends as you and I,
Sharing their hearts alone with one another,
Endure not bystanders when they confer !
Is it not so ?

ALMAGRO.

Why are we here ?

ALASCO.

Almagro !
Why are we anywhere, but by the will
Of Heaven ?—Its will be done !—Will you say so ?

ALMAGRO.

Why should I not ?

ALASCO.

Why Heaven has given command
To men, they shall not murder ; and 'tis written,
Who sheddeth blood shall bleed !—Sit down, Almagro,
On yonder engine.—I shall seat me here,
Such things awaken thoughts of seriousness,
And serious is the work we have in hand !—
Won't you sit down ?—Decline you the fair seat ?
You shrink from it ! You are a man of ruth !
You know full well it is the couch of groans,—
Of sweat-drops, wrung by dint of agony,
Of death pangs, thick and sharp, though lingering,
In one of which more writhing lies than he knows
Who, limb by limb, is broken on the wheel !—
And yet, when I bethink myself again,
I wonder you should loathe the instrument !
For look at me !—I breathe as free as ever,

My arms are folded o'er a heart at ease,
Its wonted hue, methinks, invests my cheek,
And I am sitting on the very block,
Yet never lifted axe to lop a head !—
Come !—take your seat, Almagro !

ALMAGRO.

What do you mean ?

ALASCO.

I'll tell you, answer me a word or two !
Did I not trust you ?—did I not love you ?—both
With the simplicity of a very boy ?
You know I did.—If you do not, say so.

ALMAGRO.

I do not say so.

ALASCO.

No ?—So far, so well.

ALMAGRO.

What do you purpose ?—wherefore bring me hither ?

ALASCO.

I haven't done yet !—Was't not my pride, Almagro,
To build you up in men's esteem above
Myself ?—Whene'er they gave Alasco credit
For this or that desert,—did he not mount
Your merits on his own ? If he did not,
Deny it.

ALMAGRO.

Nay, I don't deny it.

ALASCO.

Well,
Again !

ALMAGRO.

Alasco, this is freezing work !

ALASCO.

Not so, Almagro,—all the frost's to come !
You were a man of doubtful rank, Almagro—
I mean in men's esteem—when first I knew you ;
Among our comrades, some did rate you low,
Some high, though doubtingly ; none very high ;
I raised you to the top, and kept you there ;
Yea, when the people's choice between us lay
In even balance, 'gainst myself I gave
The casting vote at once that made you Regent !
Now, to the credit side—my debts to you !
They are few, but large, Almagro !—Foremost, then,
A sister's sacredness profaned !—That trespass,
Had I learnt it then, all the rest had saved thee—
Tell me how a man a modest woman treats,
And I'll tell you what kind of man he is !
In the next place—my credit undermin'd—
You know who Cortez is —and with the smile
Of a friend, that never yet play'd fast and loose,
My freedom jeopardised—perhaps my life !—
And last of all—ay,—look upon the rack !—
You might as well have laid an infant on it,
You would as soon !—I believe it !—last of all,
My father like a sound leaf withering,
Which if allow'd to hang its little time
Falls with a breath that hardly stirs the spray,
Thou wouldst not suffer dreamingly to die,
But brought'st, with heart to ruth impenetrable
As flint to dew, to an untimely end,
Forestalling sleep with torture !

ALMAGRO.

You forget !
Your father hated me—what progeny,
Except the serpent, should the serpent have ?
You thwarted me,—who would not push aside
The lett that stood 'twixt his soul's wish and him ?
Your sister drove me mad with love, and spurn'd me !

ALASCO.

You never knew what love was !—Love !—What ! love
A virtuous maiden, and, with no inclining
On her part towards thee, dare to violate
Even the gauze that veils her modest face ?
He ne'er knew love—can never know—who knows not
Woman unlaps'd is, next to Heav'n, most sacred !
Say that the man, who would profane her, loves her !
And if he does, brutes love as much as he !
You ne'er went mad with anything so holy !

ALMAGRO.

Why have you brought me to this place ?

ALASCO.

To die !
That thou shouldst bring me to the pass, Almagro,
That makes me tell thee this !—me !—thy Alasco !
Thine even more, in cherishing, than ever
He was his own ; whose brain, heart, body, limbs,
At any time sooner than for himself,
He had lain down for thee !—When a gaunt bear
Rush'd from a thicket towards thee once, who lay,
Ere thou could'st wink, struggling upon the ground
Twixt thee and him ? calling to thee to fly,
So all forgetful was he of himself,
Although entangled in the deadly hug

Of the fell monster? With my forest knife
I saved this arm its blood,—so saving thee—
This arm, now nerv'd to kill thee!—(*Drawing.*)—How can
this be?

How has it come to pass?—whence this blank wreck
Of love, so staunchly built, I could have sworn
The storm blew never yet could break it up!
Tell me!—for I am wild with wondering!

ALMAGRO.

I wonder too, but am not wild withal,
That thou shouldst wish to take thyself the life
Thou knowest to be forfeited.

ALASCO.

Why, who
So fit to be thy executioner?—
To fill the office whose revolting nature
Flesh creeps at so, its functionary sickens,
With loathing, those who only look upon him?
Who, for an office so unnatural,
So fit, as such a trespasser 'gainst nature
As I am?—to a stranger to my blood
Who gave that trust, which to the source of it
I owed but would not give!—Except for me
Thou ne'er hadst laid my father on the rack,
'Twas I who gave thee power o'er his grey hairs,
I was his murderer as well as thou.
Of felons men make executioners!

ALMAGRO.

My blood be on thy soul, so shedd'st thou it!

ALASCO.

Almagro, I will shed it!—thou must bleed,
And by this hand; but I will use this hand

As it becomes a soldier and a man!—
Here is another sword!—This brave revenge
Breath'd I the wish to take, I were prevented!
The meanest hind in Arragon would flout
The thought of honourable chastisement
To one so fallen as thou art,—but I hold it
A debt due to a father by his son,
And mean to pay it in full!—No further parley!
What is infirm in thee, as I do know
But must not now cast thought to, overlook!
Come, guard thy life!—strike manfully at mine!
'Tis the last time its bane may prove thy safeguard!

ALMAGRO.

Hold yet a moment!—thou wouldst give me, sure,
Fair play!—Thy weapon is the longer one!—

ALASCO.

Measure it!—there!

[Gives his sword to ALMAGRO, who throws it away.]

ALMAGRO.

Lo! thou who now so freely
Wouldst shed Almagro's blood, and boasting
Didst make a merit on't, look to thine own!
Not by Alasco's honourable sword,
Nor by the scaffold, shall Almagro die!
Such means am I provided with, as scoff
At aught the executioner, or thou
Canst perpetrate against me. Mark, Alasco!
Almagro dies, but thou shalt die before him;
For in thy weakness, which I ever loath'd,
I see the bane that to this close has brought
My dearest hopes and me! Yet, ere I use
The vantage which thy trustfulness—I thank it

For the last time—has given me, it is fit
 Thou know the full extent of what thou ow'st me.
 Thou thought'st thy debt on the score of old Ruphino
 Was large enough; but what will be thy wonder
 When I shall tell thee thou may'st add to that
 Another larger yet? Know then, Alasco,
 Soon as the tide of fortune 'gan to ebb,
 Sudden as it set in, and 'gainst the chance
 Of aught which thou, and those in leaguc with thee,
 Could practise 'gainst me, I secured myself;—
 By my contrivance did thy sister's dagger
 Drink her own blood!

ALASCO.

—Now let thy sword drink mine!
 I will not swerve to avoid thee!—lift my arm
 To hinder thee!—move so much as a finger!
 I am a man the earth must loathe to bear!
 All who lives on't must loathe! who loathes himself!

OLIVIA (*without*).

Alasco!

ALMAGRO (*terrified*).

Heard you aught?

ALASCO (*in wonder*).

My sister call'd.

RUPHINO (*without*).

Alasco!

ALASCO (*greatly moved*).

That 's my father's voice.

ALMAGRO.

The dead

Arise!

[*Dropping the sword, and clasping his hands.*]

VELASQUEZ (*without*).

Alasco!

ALASCO.

Now Velasquez calls!

ALMAGRO.

Velasquez is not dead?

ALASCO.

Sustain me, Heaven!

Out of such darkness, if such light should break,
Has nature strength to bear it? What was that
One whisper'd me as I came in, "With doubt
Receive whate'er thou hearest." Am I to doubt
My father's death? my sister's death? I have heard
Of nought beside—

[VELASQUEZ, RUPHINO, and OLIVIA,
without, calling together.

ALL.

Alasco!

OLIVIA (*without*).

Open, Pedro.

[*The door opens; OLIVIA, RUPHINO, the KING,
ALONZO, VELASQUEZ, and PEDRO, enter.*

ALASCO.

Alive!

OLIVIA.

My brother!—Safe! Thanks, gentle Heaven!

Alasco, my Alasco!—O my brother! [*Embracing him.*

ALASCO.

My father, too! Oh!—pardon your Alasco!

[*Kneeling to RUPHINO.*

RUPHINO.

My son, we all need pardon!

ALASCO.

Who is he?

OLIVIA.

The gracious prince ; who, of my danger warn'd,
Return'd to Sarragossa : thus disguis'd,
Watch'd o'er thy sister at his dear life's peril,
And thereby sav'd thy father from the rack,
Her from dishonour !

ALASCO.

Sir, I am confounded !—
What shall I say to thee ?

ALONZO.

Call me thy brother !

KING.

As hence, thy sister I shall call my child !

ALMAGRO (*aside*).

Destroy'd by those I deem'd my instruments !
Frustrated in revenge, in love and hate !
What fair set-off 'gainst such discomfiture ?
The gibbet cheated, or the block, or wheel !
Could we cheat Heaven !—No circumventing there !
What's this I see ?—Instead of the huge World
A film ; and what before was shadowy,
The World to come, condensing into vast
Enormous substance, insupportable
To thought ! The drug asserts its potency !
This is the death-sweat that bedews my palms
My forehead and my lip, and like a cold
And slimy serpent, coiling round my frame,
With its loath'd folds, my very marrow chills.

KING.

What man is he, that yonder stands and lives,
Yet seems in the mortal agony ?

ALASCO.

Almagro.

KING.

What!—he!—then has he look'd upon the sun
For the last time!—the rack shall deal with him.
No death-bed half so fit. Let 's leave him to it. [Going.

ALASCO.

Oh no, my liege!

KING.

Thou wouldst not plead for him!
Up! up! thy knee rebels, young man, to bend
'Gainst nature! justice! Earth and Heaven, themselves,
To supplicate for him whom they condemn!
Against thy father's life thou makest suit,
Against thy sister's honour—not to name
The wrong he meditated 'gainst thyself!
Forbear, young man. Why hang you thus your head,
And still the posture keep that casts it down?
What would you ask for?

ALASCO.

Time for penitence.
A month! Well, then, a week! If not a week,
A day! Between the attempt, sir, and the act
There is a difference; so should there be
Between the pains with which we visit them.
The crimes he dies for were not perpetrated;
No victim calls for retribution.
Spare him. O God! sir, we were boys together.
Howe'er it changes with us on life's road,
The sunny start all intervals breaks through,
And warms us with the olden mood again!
The hearty laugh of youth is in mine ear,

And there stands he who shared it with me, now
A woful bankrupt ; while the rich possessions
I counted lost, are all my own again.
I can't forbear. Say that I hold my tongue,
My eyes will speak : you see they do without ;
And for the playmate's sake implore thee spare
The man, although a weak and guilty one !

KING.

Against my judgment does my heart give way,
Corrupted by your tears. His life is yours :
Do with it what you list !

ALASCO.

It shall be spared.
An exile shall he live to die in penitence !
Almagro !

PEDRO.

Hush ! He dies by poison, sir !
I know the signs. He makes a sudden end !
His spirit 's gone—it fled with that groan !

ALASCO.

The pardon you permitted, Heav'n denies him !
Its justice and its mercy are its own !

THE END.

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